

SOME

MISSIVES

WRITTEN TO A
GENTLEMAN

Which contain the
AUTHOR'S AIM,
At *Detecting* and *Refuting* the
D E I S M

(As it is called) Or,
Atheism and *Libertinism*
Of our T I M E.



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To the Candid R E A D E R,



Had no Design to publish these few Sheets when my poor Thoughts were carried to the Purposes contained in them. Neither did I allow my self to think my weak Abilities proportioned to an Interprize of this Nature. Notwithstanding,

as I found my Mind delighted, and sweetened in writing the several Missives, so it was surprizing to me to understand that they were more acceptable to some Persons of good Note for Learning and Experience, than I could have expected. The Purposes are Great and Sweet, and do much want to be better treated : Yet I would fain hope my sin-

cere Aim shall be blessed to some: Forasmuch as it pleaseth the Lord to chuse the † weak Things of the World. This supports me under an afflicting Sense of my Rudeness, both in Speech and Knowledge. The Method wherein the Matter is handled, will be found New, for what I know. I have made all the inquiry I could, and have consulted Persons of Distinction and Learning, who all declared that it is New to them also. Had any of the Judicious, and renowned Patrons of Christianity in Opposition to Deism, treated these Matters in the same Order, no Room would have been left for my simple Remarks, seeing, in such an Event, I am persuaded the several Purposes would have been handled so compleatly, that I could not have adventured to glean after so full a Harvest. I pretend not to have managed that Controversy at any Length. Excellent Authors have done that, and written so largely in the Defence of Christianity, that my poor Shreds are not to be compared with their great Performances. It is but one of many Arguments that's treated in the following Missives, and I proceed therein, from that upon which sundry of our Antagonists do value themselves, viz. Moral Integrity, and Honesty, unto which the Obligations which ly upon us are universally acknowledged. That this Morality, understood aright, will infer the utter Corruption of Nature, and the necessity of Revelation and Regeneration, I humbly judge, will appear to the honest Reader by the ensuing Letters. I take

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not upon me to give the Character either of the Matter or Method, and am deeply conscious to my self that such choice Purposes do much desiderate a more judicious and experienced Author. I shall only say, that this Method in managing the Argument against Deists, is, in my Judgement, much the same which our gracious Lord useth, for the only effectual defeating this grand Evil, by taking † the Vail off from the Heart, and translating the Sinner into a State of Light: And the real truth is, that, until then, we are without God, or Atheists (as the Original bears) in the World. That holy, just and good Law, which is a Schoolmaster unto Christ (as the Original hath it) is an excellent Hammer for demolishing the weak Fabricks of Deism. It is owing to a debauchedness of Conscience thro' a custom of Vice, and to a detaining * the Truth in Unrighteousness, that these Matters clear in themselves, are yet so clouded to Wretches drenched and immersed in known Wickedness: Or, to take the Matter by the better Handle, these Shades are the result of inaccountable Sloath, while Duties abundantly manifest, and beyond all debate, are yet neglected. This, I think, is pointed at by what our Lord Jesus expressly teacheth us. My Doctrine (saith he) is not mine † but his that sent me. If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self. I have full Confi-

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† Isa. 25. 7. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Act. 28. 18. Col. 1. 13. Eph. 2. 12. Gal. 3. 24. * Rom. 1. 13. 32. † Joh. 7. 17.

dence to put the insuing Purposes upon this Issue, and can very resolutely say, That whosoever lays to Heart, and is really concerned about practising the incontestd Duties mentioned in the Missives, will find, that revealed Religion, and particularly the Revelation of Christ † in the Soul, is absolutely necessary to the Practice: Tho' I proceed upon Reason; in order to what's afterwards observed concerning Revelation, yet I have put some scriptural Places on the Margin, for that it's pleasant to view that Set in a clear Light there by the Spirit of God, at which Nature's Glimmerings obscurely grope. That this Mite may be accepted by the Lord, and blessed to thee, is the Prayer of

Thy sincere Well-wisher.

J A. H O G.

† Gal. 1. 16. Matth. 16. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 21.



I. Letter Introductory.

S I R,



I

Remember that when we were communing seriously about this, and some other afflicting Matters in these Dregs of Time, wherein the sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth hath ordered our Lot: It was mutually regreted by us,

that many of all Ranks and Ages, and especially of the younger Sort, have declined to a kind of fluctuating *Scepticism*, are unfixed in Principle, and ready to embrace (if they have not actually adopted) the most dangerous Notions, subversive even of the Foundations of Religion: And more especially when these applauded Detections are set off in such Dresses as
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are fit to recommend them to our vain Minds. It is now become Modish, and is reputed a Gentlemany Part to call in question received Truths, and even such of them as are of the greatest Weight and Influence. The Spirit of God giveth the true Portraiture of such Men, and denounceth just Wrath against them, as Persons contentious †, and who do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness. The chief Source of all this is a sad Defect as to the right Settlement in the Faith *that * God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* On this sad occasion, I find Freedom and Inclination (which I hope are of the Lord) to enlarge by sundry Missives that which was more overly touched in our converse about the Matter, and I design to proceed in the following Method. 1. I purpose, after some large Preliminaries, to lay down for a Foundation a few remarkable and uncontested *Maxims* of moral Integrity and Honesty. 2. I intend to shew in sundry Particulars the Crossness and Contrariety of our Natures unto these Maxims, while we are in this our corrupted Estate. 3. It will be proper, with some Closeness, to demonstrate, that the forementioned Contrariety is insurmountable, save only through a converting and renewing Work upon the whole Man. 4. This will open the Way to shew
clearly

† Rom. 2. 8. Hof. 4. 4. 2 Tim. 3. 8. * Heb. 11. 5. 6. Rom. 14. 23.

clearly that such a Change beareth in its Nature, and hath in-laid with it, the Principles and Myſteries of *revealed Religion*, the only effectual Mean for that End, being a diſplay † of the *Glory of Chriſt* to the Soul.

I greatly honour the elaborate Works of learned Men, wherein they have excellently refuted the rampant Atheiſm of this profane Age, under its various Diſguiſes; and ſhall be loath to enter upon their Labours, my Rudeneſs rendring me utterly unfit to write after ſuch fair Copies. That which I deſign, ſhall be carried no further, ſave to the Reſults of what it pleaſed the Lord to teach me, (may I ſay ſo far) under my own Toſſings about the ſeveral Heads, and therefore I can have no other Copy in View, ſave the Traces of a Pillar of Cloud, and Fire *, in the merciful Conduct of a poor Weakling, ſome Length through the Wilderneſs; and that I may juſt enter upon the Purpoſe, I incline to offer a few Conſiderations relating to the Moral Law in general, and then to give a ſhort Abſtract of ſome Parts of moral Equity that is diſcovered, and authoritatively enjoined therein. This will lay the broader Foundation to ſome moral Axioms, which are deſtinated to prepare the Way for the chief Subject of theſe Miſſives. And throughout the whole of this, I intend to guard

† 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4, 5. Mat. 13. 44, 45. Gal. 1. 16. &c.

* Pſal. 119. 105. 2 Pet. 1. 19. Pſal. 19. 7, 8, &c.

guard against the unnecessary repeating of any Thing that may be found to much better Purpose in the Works of renowned Authors, who have treated Matters of this Sort

Touching the Moral Law in general, and as the same is comprehended summarily in the *Ten Commandments* *, or ten *Words*. I know our Deists (or Atheists) will have little Regard to it, as it is now written, and maketh a Part of the sacred Canon. I enter not upon the Debate on that Head, for the Time; but assuredly Matter of Fact in this Case cannot be questioned, viz. That such a Law there is, so much is extant, and under the View of every one. This is all I presuppose in the present Matter, and do hereupon assert, that this Law known and published, where ever Christianity is professed, this Law, I say, hath so many Stamps of its Author imprinted upon it, with so much of Relucence, that it may compete with, yea; and hath a manifold, and clear Brightness of Character, that giveth it a Preference to all the Laws which ever were enacted in the World. The Subject here is very large, and therefore I dare not adventure to dip far into it: I only tender a few Particulars to your more serious, and deliberate Consideration. 1st, The whole and every Part of this divine Abstract is completely just, and † equal, the Author of it hath shewed

* Exod. 20. 1. 2, 3, &c. Mat. 22. 37, 38. Rom. 13. 8, 9, 10. Mat. 19. 18, 19, &c. † Rom. 7. 12.

shewed us therein what is * good to the full Compass. The best of humane Laws, when compared with this, are but mean and empty Inventions: Besides, that many of these have Iniquity mingled in with them, in more, or less. It were easy to compile a Catalogue of many Instances, more than sufficient, to evince what I have advanced. But eminent Authors have done this to good Purpose, as Occasions required, and I love not to repeat. Only I remind you, that the politest Nations have made, and are daily making Changes in their Laws from Time to Time, and these Constitutions are altered, and amended in this Event, not only because of Inconveniencies, but also from Views of Iniquity, sometimes inlaid with them. But in the present Case, which respects that perfect, tho' short System; there is no Occasion for any, no, not the least Alteration, seeing these holy, just, and good Laws do exactly suit the circumstanced Cases of all Mankind, and of every one of them, all is just, and equal here, and the heavenly Equity shineth with so much of illustrious Fulgor, as surpasseth the Light of Demonstration.

2dly, This holy, just, and good Law is admirably full: It is exceedingly † broad, and extensive, nothing is omitted here that belongs to moral Equity. Take that Equity in its largest

* Micah 6. 8. Deut. 10. 12. Eccl. 12. 13, &c. † Psal. 119. 96. & 19. 7, 8, 9, &c.

largest Diffusion, and it will be found, that all within the Verge thereof, is here comprised, whether we understand it as containing a compleat System of Virtues, or a full Display of Vices. Hereof I want not to give any other Proof, save to make an Appeal to the Consciences of the most perspicacious *Libertines*, (for howsoever they decry, and banter Conscience, as if it were a Melancholy, and whimsical Invention, yet it is beyond the Reach of the most daring Desperado's amongst them, to extinguish that * Candle of the Lord) I would make my Appeal, I say, to the Consciences of any, and especially of the more polite amongst them, and give a Defiance to them all to instance a Virtue or Vice that is not contained within these *ten Words*. Besides, that there is a vast Deal more comprehended in them, than ever came within the View of the most accomplished *Moralists*, either within, or without the Church, tho' yet the little Scraps of that Sort the Heathens understood, were rather owing to Tradition from the true Church, than the Fruit of their Diligence.

3dly, If hereunto we add the divine and inimitable Brevity, yet mingled with astonishing Clearness, whereby these *ten Words* are eminently signalized beyond all the Products of the most renowned Legislators. Who can possibly escape

* Prov. 20. 27.

escape the Conviction that God only is the *Law-giver* here, unless he shakes off all Temper, and Sobriety, and presume to deny what hath a greater Brightness of Evidence, than if it were written with the Beams of the Sun.

4thly, The nervous, and powerful Force, and Efficacy of Expression hath so much of excellent Beauty, and divine Majesty inlaid therewith, as, with its other Properties, gives me ground to think, that a Declaration of the Matter, even to a sober, and unprejudiced Heathen, would through the divine Blessing, find an easy Perswasion that God himself either spake, or some one or another Way is the Author of these Words, in regard both Matter and Expression have so many Impresses of Divine Authority upon them, as do fully evince their being the Product of infinite Wisdom. So much then we have gained, namely, that the astonishing Fulness, Perspicuity, admirable Conciseness, with a divine Emphasis and Power of Expression, do each of them severally, and yet much more do they all when put together, proclaim the Glories of the Author. I essay not to give any further Proof of that which I have advanced, in regard the Matter is plain in it self, and I cannot offer any Thing that's beyond its innate Relucence, we cannot well give a satisfying Definition of Light, and scarcely can we carry our Accounts the Length of any tolerable Description thereof; and yet
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this is so far from being owing to any Obscurity in the Thing, that upon the contrary, it is the Result of a shining Evidence, which surmounteth Words. Nevertheless, it is not possible to perceive that Evidence without Eyes. The same Thing holds here; and therefore I shall use no more Words about it, but do only lay this down as a Principle, and the Ground-Work of the following Superstructure, *viz. The Moral Law is from the Lord.* You may expect further Accounts in following Missives. I remain, &c.

L E T T E R II.

Wherein Touches are given at some Heads, all plain in this Moral Law; which being enlarged and improven, would amount to a System of uncontested Morality; and some Duties are specified, which we owe to the Law-giver himself.

SIR,

IN my last I mentioned a few Properties of the *Moral Law* in general, which give clear and sweet Indications of its glorious Author. I design by this to give you some little Glances at the Contents of the Law it self. I know that Accounts of this Nature have been given by eminent Divines, who were honoured to do great Services to the Churches of Christ,
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by their notable Commentaries upon, and Expositions of this Law. I enter not upon their Work, but do only design to hint at a few Generals, all founded on *Reason*, howsoever weak and imperfect in us. Somewhat of this Kind I cannot omit so much being necessary to lay a Foundation for the *Moral Axioms*, upon which I project to build the following Purposes.

1st, More generally I observe, That in regard the Law is so very full, as was already mentioned, and seeing Man being a Creature endowed with Reason, is capable of rational Conformity unto a Law and Rule : It is manifest beyond controul, that this Conformity ought to be compleat †, it should reach and be extended throughout the whole Man *, our Souls and Bodies, with all the Faculties and Powers of the same, are required to be blameless, having that Stamp of Purity upon them, which is suitable unto this perfect Rule. It cannot be called in question, but that a reasonable Nature is capable of moral Beauty and Purity, and therefore the Obligation of all reasonable Creatures thereunto, and to the Perfection thereof, is plain, and beyond all Exception. And for as much as the † Compleatness, and Contents of the Law, bear its Extension to our Natures, and way, our Thoughts, Words and Deeds in their whole Compass ; it clearly fol-

† Mat. 5. 48. * 1 Thes. 5. 22. 23. † Psal. 119. 96.
 & 19. 7, 8, 9.

that in all these we ought to be conformable to it.

2. Presupposing that we are thereby required to have a just Consideration of, and Deference unto the God of Glory, our only Law-giver: As also, that we are therein enjoined to be under a suitable Concernment about our selves, and our fellow Subjects under this glorious Lord and Legislator; it is manifest from the Tenor and Perfection of this Law, that we are therein taught and enjoined the just and equal Measures of Behaviour that's due in all the forementioned Regards; and therefore I design to point at some few Things, with Reference to each of them, referring you for larger Accounts unto such Authors as have treated Purposes of this Sort particularly and expressly. And first, as to the *Lawgiver*, the following Classes of Duties are plain, and beyond Controversy.

1. It is evident from the *First Command*, That all * Honour and Homage becoming God's glorious Excellencies, are due unto him from rational Creatures, made by their Lord and Creator, with a Capacity to know and acknowledge him. He is God, the alone independent, and self-sufficient Being; and every Creature hath as much of Dependence upon him, as it hath of Being: Hence, forasmuch as rational Creatures depend upon him in a
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* Psal. 29. 1, 2. Jer. 10. 6. Exod. 15. 11.

rational Way, suiting their rational Being; they ought, as such, or in that Capacity, to acknowledge this Dependence in every Act of Worship and Obedience that cometh within the Verge of the perfect Rule.

2. It is no less highly reasonable; and required *Command Second*, That the Homage, Worship, and Service due to our sovereign Lord, shall be wholly under the Rules * which he hath prescribed. They amongst Men, who are dignified with Sovereignty, do all challenge a Right in this Matter: And the *Law of Nations* provides, That the Homage, Deference, and Obedience which are given to Kings, shall not depend upon the Disposal and Arbitrement of their Subjects; such Acknowledgments are brought under a higher and authoritative Regulation, by these in whom Sovereignty is lodged, according to the Nature and Limits of the several Civil Governments. And forasmuch as this is reckoned amongst the *Regalia*, with the Princes and Potentates of the Earth; the Purity of Reason demandeth, That the *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, be acknowledged and honoured, as having the intire and sole Disposal of his own Worship, in all the Parts and Pertinents of the same, as also of the Obedience that is due unto him, in the whole

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* Isa. 29. 13. Mat. 15. 9. Col. 2. 23.

Extension thereof. No Creature hath any Right to make Appointments in these Matters: And, if they pretend to a Power of this Kind, it must needs be by *Delegation*; in which Case, it is the Right of every one, and a Part of the Honour they owe to the God of Glory, to require their *Credentials*. Otherwise, a submitting our Necks, yea, and our Souls to human Yokes, as to Worship, or any Part of Obedience, is a most unreasonable Servitude. It is memorable, that a Heathenish Monarch expressed a just Concernment about this weighty Business, when he gave Order, *That whatsoever * was commanded by the God of Heaven, should be done in his House*. There is no Place then for making new Laws about these Matters, unless we advance a Position which highly reflects upon the Honour of our alone Lord, and Lawgiver; namely, That these Things are not sufficiently provided for, by his own Laws and Institutions: For, if they be, (and it would border upon Blasphemy, to alledge they are not) there is no Room left for Constitutions, not founded upon the perfect Rule.

3. It is highly reasonable, plainly required *Command Third*, and Reason it self (howsoever weak and imperfect in our present State) doth also challenge it as an incontestèd Right of a Deity,

* Ezr. 7. 23.

Deity, That in all our Acknowledgments of him, and Concernments about every Thing whereby he is pleased to make himself known, our Souls should be impressed with profound * Reverence, from some just Sense of his glorious Majesty ; and in particular, That all our Endeavours at Obedience to his Will, be inlaid with the deepest Veneration. This the very Notion of a Deity demands ; Him we ought to see in all Things, and to point towards him as the great and ultimate End † in every Thing : Forasmuch as it belongs to him to be our *Omega* and last End, upon the very same Grounds that instruct his being our *Alpha*, the Author of what we are, and who hath us entirely under the Care of his Providence. Thus to set him continually * before our Eyes, to live and breathe still in the Fear of his Name, is a Life truly rational.

4. In like Manner, Reason also saith what's required *Command Fourth*, That the God of our Being, unto whom we owe our Life, Breath, and all Things, ought to be acknowledged and adored, not only in more secret and retired Ways, but also by † Societies and Communities, with all possible Solemnity. Every Person, and each Society, of whatsoever Kind, hath as much of Dependence upon the *God of the Spirits*
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* Job 28. 28. Ps. 111. 10. Eccl. 12. 13. Psal. 89. 7.
 † Ps. 27. 4. & 73. 24. Rom. 11. 36. Rev. 1. 8. * Ps.
 16. 8. † Ps. 100. 1, 2, 3, 4. Heb. 12. 22, 23.

of all *Flesh*, as it hath of Being; or (which amounts to one) is in every Thing dependent upon our sovereign Lord: And that this Dependence should be acknowledged in the most solemn Ways, is capable of a manifold Demonstration, even from the Glimmerings of Nature, were it necessary to enlarge upon a Head so very plain. It were a heavy Imputation upon the Reason of any sober Person, should I think that he wanted to have a Position proven to him, which no Man can deny, unless his Conscience were debauched to such a high Pitch of enormous Wickedness, as to procure his out-facing, and daring God himself, the God, and sovereign Lord of Men, in every Capacity, and of all Societies. I shall only take the Freedom to deduce a Corrolary or two from the preceeding Assertions, both because the Import of the Matter requireth, and the Evidence thereof pointeth at them; besides that they are of a necessary Consideration, with Respect to some circumstanced Cases in our Day.

Corrolary 1. It appeareth hence, that the Worship of God in Families, * is a Part of these Acknowledgments which are due to our Sovereign Lord, in Regard every Society, as such, hath as much of Dependence on him, as it possesseth of Being; and is, as to this De-

Dependence, upon the same Level with private Persons, and bound, upon the very same Grounds, to acknowledge that Dependence in Worship and Obedience, suitably to its Circumstances. The Proportion holds, as any judicious Person may easily see: And hence the Worship of the Lord in a Family Relation, hath a clear Foundation in these Notices of a Deity, which even Nature's Glimmerings do suggest. Neither were the Heathens themselves Strangers to so much, as appears by the Idolatry of their *Penates*, or Household Gods: Some Notices of this Kind were at Bottom with them, tho' dreadfully corrupted, as other Things were.

Corrolary 2. As Reason it self would say, that it is most becoming for the Heads of the respective Families to perform the several Parts of Worship competent to them, (soasmuch as their Relation to the Family bears Authority, and demands a representing the Family therein) so the just Notions of a Deity, will clearly evince, that it is far from carrying any Disparagement, but is upon the contrary truly honourable for the † greatest amongst Men to go about such social Duties. Near Admission to crowned Heads is generally much valued, and the Persons are thought highly privileged who have access unto them, and occasions to deal with them, whether for themselves, and

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yet

† 2 Sam. 6. 20. Pf. 138. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

yet more, in so far as they represent others. It's reputed a great Honour unto any for sovereign Princes to speak unto them, and to allow them access to utter their Minds unto Princes ; hence the Consequence is plain and easy, *viz.* That a Presidency in solemn and social Worship, as Persons are called, and have access thereunto, is a most honourable Work. Hereupon I cannot escape to infer with some suitable Commotion in my own Mind, that a despising such Exercises as unworthy of, and below Persons even of no great Note, reflecteth deeply upon the true God whom we pretend to Worship, and I tremble to mention from what Sources the contemptuous vilifying of them must necessarily proceed.

Corrolary 3. Tho'. I dare not adventure to say, That Nature's glimmerings detect the Proportion of Time, which is to be regularly consecrated unto the Lord, and employed solemnly and intirely in the Duties of his Worship, namely a seventh Part of the Week, whether the last or first Day thereof, tho' I dare not say, that Nature's Light can possibly determine this, in its present corrupt Estate, whatever it might have reached to, if it had remained intire : Yet I can take upon me to assert, That the Proportion being now revealed, appeareth manifestly to be most equal. But waving in this Abstract every Thing that may be reputed Matter of doubtful Disputation,

tion, I only represent it as most reasonable, and clearly deducible from Nature's Light, especially at the Advantages of its Improvement by Revelation, namely that Worship whether *Secret, Social*, or more *Publick* and *Solemn*, ought necessarily to have its set Times. The Nature of Man is now become most irregular, and therefore that which hath no certain Time assigned to it, cannot readily fail to be neglected. Whatsoever Time then our sovereign Lord hath set apart for his Worship, must needs be observed punctually. So much by way of *Corrolary*. I return now to the main Purpose, and represent

5. That the summ of this Part of the *Moral Law*, as declared in the Scriptures, is clearly founded on Reason, *viz.* We are obliged to love the Lord *with all our Hearts, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength*. What we are, and have, Life, Breath, and all Things we owe wholly unto him; and seeing he is the God of Glory independent, and infinitely Perfect, infinite Honour and Homage would be due unto him, were it possible for finite Creatures to pay that Regard: Bur forasmuch as their finite Natures cannot allow such a Defe-
 rence, assuredly the most complete that Creatures can be capable of belongs unto him: Let this suffice for a glance at some Generals with relation unto what we owe in point of Duty to our sovereign Lord. The next shall ac-
 count

count for the Duties we owe unto God, with reference unto our own Persons, and to our Neighbours. I remain, &c.

LETTER III.

Which containeth Regulations founded on Reason, with Respect to our selves and our Neighbours, suiting the second Table of the Law.

S I R,

Please without any preamble to take my poor Thoughts about this Matter in the following Positions.

1. *Man is not his own.* All he hath of Being, the Advantages he enjoyeth of any Sort, and the Qualities he is endowed with, whatsoever these be, he holdeth them all of his Lord, and oweth them intirely unto him. We can claim nothing as ours save the Sinfulness, Deficiency, and Deordination of our Natures. It was often observed before, that every Creature hath as much of Dependence upon its Creator and sovereign Lord, as it hath of Being, or (which is the same) dependeth upon him in every thing, † *of this God, and through him, and to him are all Things.* To this, right Reason giveth its Suffrage. Hence

2. Crea-

† Rom. II. 36. Act. 17. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, &c.

2. Creatures endowed with Reason, and who also have othewise their *All* from their Creator, and the Author of their Being; such Creatures I say, are plainly obliged to acknowledge so much, and seeing they are not their † own, they may not without the most sacrilegious Presumption arrogate unto themselves the disposal of themselves, and of any thing that is given them by their bountiful Lord. Even common Sense saith, That no Person can have Right to dispose according to his own pleasure, of that which is not his. What we are and have is intirely the Lords, and we owe it wholly to him, therefore the very glimmerings of Nature would say, that it should be used, and improven for him.

3. Our Creator and sovereign Lord, who hath given us a Being, and a Nature more excellent than that of the other sublunary Creatures: That God, I say, who hath so far honoured us, doth thereby undoubtedly require, that not only the ultimate, but likewise all subordinate Ends we propose to our selves, should be answerable to the Dignity of our Natures, as the God of Glory did at first constitute them. Assuredly it is for no mean Work that the Lord did make Man wiser than the Beasts of the Earth, and the Fowls of Heaven. And therefore,

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† Psal. 100. 3.

4. I observe with some more of closeness to the Purpose under present View, That forasmuch as our Deportment, with Respect to our selves and others, should be ordered in every thing according to Rule, because we are not our own, but do belong intirely to our Lord and Maker; it is then manifest beyond all possibility of Controul, that we are indispensibly obliged to advert unto, and observe the Regulations our sovereign Lord hath prescribed to us in all these Respects. The Purpose here is large, but I shall condescend only upon a few of many Particulars, and all of them clearly founded upon Reason.

First, It is plain in Fact, clear from *Command* 5th, and denyed by no body, That every one of the Children of Men is placed by our sovereign Lord, in some one Relation or another, or in more than one towards his Neighbour. We are according to our several Stations, either *Superiors*, *Inferiors*, or upon an *Equality* of Level with our Neighbours. Hence, as the ten Words, to which these Notes relate, do contain a complete Account of the whole Concernements of these † Relations, with the several Sins and Duties that respect the same, so I would only represent it as a clearly rational and incontestd Truth, that we are obliged by the great and only Law-giver to demean our selves according unto the Exigences

† 1 Pet. 2. 7. Rom. 12. 10. Eph. 5. 21.

gences of these Relations, as it hath pleased him to declare the same. It is not my Business to enter upon a Detail of them, they shine with an astonishing Brightness of Lustre, as contained in, and held forth from this perfect Law. Allow me only to represent a Remark or two which do both pertain to this Head, and are also of a larger Extent and Improvement. 1. It would be the Happiness, as much as it is the Duty of Mankind, exactly to keep Rank, and faithfully to acquit themselves in a diligent and close Performance of the plain and incontroverted Duties which manifestly pertain to these Relations, and sundry whereof belong to their very Essence. It wants not to be demonstrated, being Matter of Fact, which no sober Person will, or can deny, *viz.* That our Ruins, with respect to Societies of whatsoever Kind, do issue from Disturbances and Violations of the comely Order, which our sovereign Lord hath set and enjoined to be observed amongst Men; and particularly with Reference to our divers Stations, and the Relations wherein we severally stand towards one another. It is evident that the Ruins of particular Persons, Families, Incorporations, States and Nations, and in a Word, of all Societies, do chiefly proceed from a breaking of this beautiful Order: Whereas, were it punctually observed (even in so far
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as is manifest by Nature's Light) these Places which now are worse than a confused Chaos, would upon the contrary be found like an earthly Paradise. 2. I must observe, That it were the Interest, as well as it is the Duty of Mankind, and particularly of those who are in Authority amongst them, to lay out themselves all they can for suppressing *Atheism* and *Libertinism*, forasmuch as the abettors of such Abominations decry, and presume to deny the divine Obligations which ly upon us to lay to Heart the Duties of these Relations. They may be justly reckoned (as to the Tendency of the Thing) Murderers of the whole Race of Mankind, who take off the Just, and effectual Bar against the Violations of this Order, namely a submissive and intire Respect unto the Laws and Constitutions of our sovereign Lord, and the righteous Judge of all the Earth, and who allow no higher Regard unto that comely Order he hath set, than what proceeds from the Love a Person will have to his own Safety, because the gross Transgressions thereof might bring them to condign Punishment, and somewhat of Dutifulness, with Respect thereunto procureth Advantages to him. The manifest Language of such detestable Sentiments (which yet are insinuated as the Product of Wit) is plainly this, That in case a Person attain some Elevation † amongst

† Exod. 5. 2.

amongst Men, and do think himself out of their Reach, he may freely do all the Mischief he can possibly devise, especially if he have the Prospects of Advantage thereby. 3dly, As it is presumable, That in a sober and sedate Exercise of our intellectual Faculties, we may know that which is due unto us from our Neighbour, according unto our Stations, and the Relations wherein the Lord hath placed us; so Reason it self plainly saith, That we owe the like Consideration to our Neighbour, and are in the same Manner bound unto a becoming and dutiful Behaviour towards them. So much for this first Particular, with the Corrolaries from it.

2dly, Our Lives, whether *animal* or *rational*, are not our own, they belong intirely to our Lord, the Author of our Being, who hath given us Life, Breath, and all Things, and unto whom we owe our Preservation, Sustainance, and all the Advantages of Life, in whatsoever Kind, natural Light saith, and some Heathens have observed, That we are all his *Offspring*; assuredly in him *we live* †, *move*, and *have our Being*. From this Infer, that all that pertaineth to the Preservation* and Improvement of Life, whether as to quiet and sedate Temper of Mind, and a well regulated Use of the

† Acts 17. from 24. and forward. * 1 Kings 18. 4. Jer. 26. 15, 16. Acts 23. 12. — 16. 17. — 21. 27. 2 Sam. 2. 22. Deut. 22. 8. Eph. 4. 26, 27, &c. &c.

the Means of Life, together with a profitable Exercise of the Faculties of the Soul, and the Members of the Body, &c. whatsoever, I say, is within the Compass of these, and the like Heads, belongeth certainly to this perfect Law, and Rule ; all which are so manifest, that Nature it self proclaims, and a Conscience not debauched, must needs acknowledge the Obligation. I enlarge not further upon this Purpose, but shall only represent in a Word, that the Obligation we are under towards our Neighbour, is of the same Sort ; and therefore we ought to have the like tender Regard unto the Lives of others, and unto all that belongs unto these Lives, and may be beneficial, or hurtful unto them, of which we ought to have such a Consideration, and are obliged to such a Concernment about them in our Neighbour's Case, as we would think just and proper to be had in our own. This, and more appears from *Command 6th.*

3dly, This Law comprised in ten Words beareth ; the *seventh Command* assereth, and Reason giveth its Suffrage to that Chastity † and Purity in Body, Mind, Affections, Speech, Gesture, and Behaviour, which is generally professed amongst the better, and more modest Size of People ; and that every Lust, together with
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† 1 Cor. 7. 2, 3, 4, 5, 34-36. 1 Pet. 3. 2. Col. 4. 6. 1 Thes. 4. 4. Job 31. 1. Prov. 2. 16, 17, 18, &c. and 5. 19, 20, &c.

the least Inclinations, or Stirrings in Thought, Word, or Deportment, which are contrary thereunto, ought to be had in a just Detestation. The same Rule with the Grounds and Reasons thereupon founded, do equally hold, with Respect to our Neighbour : And hence we ought to have the like Regard towards the Preservation and promoting of the fore-mentioned Purity and Chastity in others, which we should desire, and endeavour to attain in our own Persons. Our Deists, I know, do rage, ridicule, and banter this, as if Lust belonged to our very Constitution, I only say to them for the Time, that Lust in the most gross Acts, and the Motions towards them, are of the same Kind, as a Drop is homogeneous to the Ocean. 2dly, The worst of them would be sensible of Injuries done to themselves in this Kind, and sure they owe the same Consideration to their Neighbour.

4thly, Presupposing *Property* amongst Men, which I presume none of our Deists will deny ; I may assume it as abundantly manifest in Reason, as well as required in this perfect Law, *Command viii.* That Equity and Mercy should be diligently sought, carefully looked to, and observed punctually in all our Business. In all these Regards, our Affairs, as to † *Contracts*

† Psal. 15. 2. Zech. 7. 9, 10. & 8. 16, 17. Rom. 13. 7. Lev. 6. 2, 3, 4, 5. Luke 19. 8. & 6. 30, 38. 1 Tim. 5. 8. Prov. 27. from 23, &c. &c.

crafts and Commerce, or whatsoever else falleth to be done betwixt Man and Man, ought to be exactly adjusted to the Exigencies of Equity, Mercy, and a truly rational and noble Generosity, which every one would desire to be used towards themselves in the several Exigencies which require the same. Moreover, I need not instruct the particular and clear Obligations which ly upon us to a provident Care and Concernment about secular Goods, namely to purchase, keep, use, and to dispose of these Things which belong to the Sustainment of Nature, and the Conveniencies of Life, in such a Manner as may afford Peace in our Consciences, being free from extremes on either Hand. Allow me only to subjoin, That as we are required to endeavour a procuring and furthering *our own Wealth and outward Estate by all just and lawful Means*, so we ought to carry the like Affection, and to express in all possible and proper Ways the like tender Care towards our Neighbour, and all that is his:

5. Of the same Evidence, and Strength is our Obligation from *Command ix.* unto whatsoever comes within the Compass of that excellent Virtue of *Veracity*. The Obligation that lyeth upon us to speak the † Truth in
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† Zech. 8. 16. Ps. 15. 2. Lev. 19. 15. Prov. 14. 5. 25. 2 Cor. 1. 17, 18. Eph. 4. 25. 1 Sam. 22. 14. Prov. 26. 24. 25. Ps. 101. 5. Prov. 22. 1. Ps. 15. 4. Phil. 4. 8. Lev. 19. 15. Hab. 1. 4. Prov. 6. 16. 19. & 19. 5. A&A. 6. 13. &c. &c.

and from our Hearts, is plain, and indisputable. Nevertheless, Reason saith, That all this must be managed and tempered with Christian Prudence, as Cases diversly circumstanced render advisable. All Truths are not to be disclosed, for he is a Fool who uttereth all his Mind. It is a reasonable Part to observe carefully, what the several Occasions require, and the Circumstances of Things, and Persons can bear. Every one would demand that, as Right in his own Case, and sure he oweth so much to his Neighbour. Nevertheless no untruth ought to be spoken upon any pretext whatsoever; and moreover, Truth must be preserved and promoted betwixt Man and Man in all the Affairs of Life. But in a peculiar manner this ought to be adverted unto, when we are regularly called to *Witness-bearing*. Admit once that Truth may be encroached upon, specious Pretences will never be wanting, and allow it in *Witness-bearing* no Man is henceforth sure of Life, or any Thing. All is at the Mercy of the worst of Men: No Society can stand without this Veracity; and for as much as a persons Credit and Reputation in the World is of great Import in all the Concernments of Life, it is no less manifest that we ought to have a special Regard thereunto, and should be very tender of our own good Name, and in the same manner, of that of

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our Neighbour with the like Affection, as if it were our own.

Finally, 6. This succinct and moral Rule bears, the *Tenth Command* requires, as also Reason and Conscience (if not utterly debauched) will add their Suffrage, that we are under the strongest Obligations to be well † satisfied with the Condition our sovereign Lord hath ordered for us in the World, whatsoever it may be, and that it is most Iniquous in any to be displeased with the better Estates of his Neighbour, and to bear the least secret Grudge against him upon any pretext whatsoever. I have insisted perhaps too long upon a plain Purpose, and it was not without inward struggling that I presumed upon your Patience in glancing at these Generals. My Design in a great part, was to shew how easy it were for a judicious Person under divine Conduct, to raise a choice System of Morals on these Grounds, and of such Evidence, that none could offer any Contradiction thereunto, without doing the utmost Violence to Reason itself. I also thought so much not improper for introducing the *Moral Axioms*, upon which the chief Purposes I have in View, are designed to be founded, and to which I proceed in the following Missives, I remain, &c.

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† Heb. 13. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 6. Job 31. 29. Rom. 12. 15. Est. 5. 13. Gal. 5. 26. Ja. 3. 14. 16. &c. Ps. 112. 9. 10. Neh. 2. 10. Rom. 7. 7, 8, &c.

LETTER IV.

Containing Moral Axioms.

SIR,

I Think not that any judicious, sober, and honest Person, would look upon it as a Stretch, should I reckon the Positions of the former Missives, at least the most of them, to be *Moral Axioms*: Neither do I expect that any whose Consciences are not much violated, and extinguished, would move any Debate about them. Nevertheless I incline not to go to Work so very largely, but do rather chuse to raise the Superstructure intended, upon a more close and near Foundation: And therefore I shall make choice of a few, and do purpose deliberately to pretermitt sundry others. The following occur to me; and as I doubt not but others of equal Weight and Evidence may be in your View, so I shall be very glad to be your Scholar in such a delicious, weighty and useful Matter. Please in the mean while to take my little Mite.

*Axiom 1. Whatever * we have just cause to think, that others should do to us, we are obliged to deal in the same manner with them.* It is true, the *Atheists* and *Libertines* of the Age will have

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* Mat. 7. 12.

no regard to this as part of the sacred Canon; yet the Thing is full of Evidence in its Nature, and was in such Repute amongst the most refined and famous Heathens, that no Man can deny, but that it challengeth the greatest Consideration from its own intrinsical Truth, Value and Evidence. It wants not to be instructed, seeing it is a *Maxim* or first *Principle*, and to be sure, a notable Expedient for Safety amongst Mankind, which every one will desire. Notwithstanding I think it proper to offer a few Remarks for its further Illustration. 1. It is not to be doubted, but that in our Concerns, we may in the Use of ordinary Means easily know what's within the Limits of Equity † and Mercy, and how far the Obligations unto the one and other ought to be extended in our circumstanced Cases. And in the Event of our erring, (for we are not infallible any way) it is fairly presumable, the Error will sway towards the more favourable Side in that which relateth to our selves. Howsoever, I may justly assert that *Right* and *Wrong*, in most of the Concerns of Life, are not so clouded, but that they may be discerned, and the Marches may be conveniently rid betwixt the one and other; so that any Person of ordinary Capacity, shall in the Use of Means, be brought to a satisfying Point about them, without much Difficulty. And tho' in some Cases

† Mic. 6. 8. Ja. 1. 27.

Cases, the Strait were not easily extricable ; yet, as such are rare, so the just measures of Conduct depend not much upon them. 2. Whatsoever we justly think is due unto us by any, upon whatsoever account, whether of more strict Justice, Mercy, Generosity, or in any other valuable Regard, we have the like Causes to conclude that the very same Things, are upon the same Grounds, equally due by us unto others, in whatever Relation we stand, or may be brought into, towards them, and whereinfoever we have access to deal with them in the Business of Life. 3. Hence it is manifest, that in our whole Conduct, and every part of our Management amongst Men, we ought to have a clear Conscience that we measure nothing to them but what we sincerely, and as before God, do think should, and would accordingly desire to be measured out to our selves. In one Word, I take the Sense of the *Axiom* to amount unto this, namely we ought to put our Neighbours, just in our own place, and to consider them, as if they were our selves, and in all our Dealings about them, to treat them as we have just Ground to desire that we our selves may be treated. Here's a clear Rule of Equity, Mercy, Generosity, and every Thing valuable in Morals, a Maxim so highly rational, that it cannot be disputed nor denied, unless we abandon Reason it self. And yet any Person may see how great a Com-

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pend of Business it would happily make, and what a vast Number of Debates might be issued by a due adverting thereunto. I need not remind you, how that almost all the Contests which have place amongst Men, and do fill the World with so much Injustice, Cruelty, Oppression, Confusion, Wars, Tumults, and every evil Thing, do clearly proceed from a regardlessness of, and Opposition unto this plain Axiom.

*Axiom 2d, The Measure of Duty we owe, either more immediately unto God, or to Man by his Command, is that Declaration of Right, our sovereign Lord, the only Law-giver, hath given; and which he hath enjoined by the ten Words. * Which Will is also interwoven with the very Make, and Nature of Things, as any judicious Observer may see, who shall determine Right and Wrong, save only, that God who is the Author of our Being, and who hath made us reasonable Creatures. Assuredly we depend upon him in every Thing, and are under indispensible Obligations to be intirely subject unto him in all that we are, or have in every Station, and in all the Relations, wherein we stand. So much then I may fairly assume: Nevertheless for a further Illustration of the Matter, I subjoin the following Corrolaries. 1st, We are not then to be determined about*

* Exod. 20. 1, 2, 3. Mat. 22. 37. Rom. 13. 9, 10. Mat. 19. 18, 19.

about Right, or Wrong, by the Prospects we raise concerning future Events, whether they are like to prove favourable, or adverse. I confess, these Practices are ready to have the Ascendant over us, which allure, by promising the Advantages we chiefly value. In such Events our Understandings are very obnoxious to be imposed upon, and from this Source it proceeds, that the just Boundaries betwixt Right and Wrong, whether as to Sentiment, or Practice, are not duely adverted unto, when these Considerations which belong not to the Cause, do notwithstanding bear the greatest Sway with us. And as the Probability of Emoluments carrieth us easily to the wrong Side, by flattering Insinuations, so the fears of Trouble prepossessing the Mind, have the like Effect and Influence, through an Excess of Determent. But all this is contrary to Reason, forasmuch as the declared Will of our sovereign Lord shewing us *Good* and *Evil*, enjoining the one, and forbidding the other; the Will, I say, of our sovereign Lord is the only true Measure of *Sin* and *Duty*. I freely acknowledge that we ought to have a due Regard to, and Consideration of the Probability of Events, in whatsoever Kind, this belongeth to, and becometh rational Creatures: Neither is it to be doubted, but that such Prospects are capable of a manifold Improvement. Nevertheless, they are not the Standarts of Sin and Duty, nor can it consist with

with right Reason that we take our Measures as to these weighty Matters, from such Prospects. Hence 1. These Setts of Politicks which generally have a great Vogue in the World, are both irreligious and contrary to Reason: For such Politicians (as to the greater Part) have little if any Concern about the Limits, which our sovereign Lord has set betwixt Right and Wrong, but do generally push the Ends which they propose to themselves by any Means they think feasible, without bringing the one or other to the Rule and Touch-stone, and so strong is the Current this way, that they are generally reputed the wisest Men who work out their Designs, tho' at the sad Rate of much unaccountable Iniquity.

Corrolary. 2. Forasmuch as the Will of the Law-giver states our Duty, and that it is not to be determined by extrinsical Considerations, how weighty or valuable soever we may think them to be, or under whatsoever Dress they may either allure, or deter us; it plainly followeth, that how undutiful, and unbecoming soever our Neighbour's Deportment towards us may be, tho' he should intirely neglect his Duty, and go cross to it in every Thing, yet whatsoever the Law hath stated as our Duty to him, remaineth, as to the whole Compass, still of the same obligatory Nature. For the Rule runs not thus, *Whatever Men do to you, do ye that to them;* but, *Whatsoever ye would*
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that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them : And every Body knows, that none would desire any Hurt to be done to them. Nothing can be excepted against this, unless it be instructed, that in case of these Injuries, our Obligation ceaseth ; which, I think, not any sober Person will assert. And seeing his injurious Behaviour against us, is sinful on his Part, the like Returns from us, cannot be free of Sin. In this Case, Sin is fertile, and the Commission thereof by him, brings forth the like, and often a more plentiful Brood in us. Reason, if not byass'd, would say, That the Wickedness of our Neighbour, in the fore-mentioned Regards, renders him an Object of Compassion, but not of Revenge. Further *Axioms* I reserve till the next. I remain, &c.

L E T T E R V.

Containing more Axioms.

SIR,

Without any Preface, I go on in laying down yet more *Axioms* of incontest'd Morality.

Axiom 3. *In the Business'es of Life, more * publiok Good should have the Preference to that which*

* See Scriptures afterward in the Comparison.

which is personal and private. The Nature of Things bears, that the one should be subordinated to the other; for our private Good is so interwoven with the publick, and depends so upon it, that in the Preference of the Publick to the Private, the Interests of private Persons, Constituents of the Publick, will be found: Thus, by a Rebound, the publick proves our private Good. All grant this *in Thesi*. Men of publick Spirits, and who sacrificed, or at least subjected private Interests to these of their Country, have been in great and just Estimation, not only amongst Christians, but also amongst the very Heathens. The Maxim then may be assumed; and, being amongst the first Principles of Morality, it requires no Probation. I shall only (according to my usual Method) annex a Corrolary or two, for illustrating it further. *Cor. 1st*. It is then contrary to Reason, for any, so much as in his Heart, to desire (but it is yet far worse, from private Views, and the Prospects of private Advantage, to give Consent to) any Thing which he knows to be unjust, and of a Tendency, in the Nature of the Thing, prejudicial unto some publick Interest. And if so, it is utterly unaccountable to demolish publick Interests for building our own Houses. *Cor. 2^d*. In the Competition, when either a whole Society shall risque the being brought low, and gradually ruined, or private Persons must forego some

some Conveniencies of Life; yea even tho' its Necessaries should be impaired to some degree, while yet we may live, tho' not so conveniently or plentifully: Unbyassed Reason will give a clear Suffrage, namely let these Conveniencies rather go, yea, and let us generously and cheerfully comply to be straitned as to some Necessaries, and let not a whole Community suffer for gratifying our Ease, the Vanity of our Minds, or any other Lust Whatsoever. *Cor. 3d.* It belongeth unto the Estimation we owe to the publick Good, or the welfare of Societies, whereof we are Members, of whatever Nature they be; and it is also incumbent upon us in point of Duty, that every Member thereof lay out himself under divine Influence, so far as can come within his reach, for promoting their Good. No advantageous State, as to the Means and Accommodations of this Life, can exempt one or other from the Obligations that ly upon him, by the Relations he stands in towards the Society. It is indeed generally necessary, to have and use a lawful Calling for affording Subsistence, to those who are not opulently stated. But tho' these Grounds and Motives had no place, and that the Person did swim in Wealth, yet the Tyes I speak of, are not only the same, but do also receive a considerable increase from the Handles which great Wealth and Ease do afford, for being manifoldly useful. Nature dictates
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so much, and every one lays it to Heart, with Respect to the Concerns of his own Body. Each Member of our Bodies, yea, even the smallest and most inconsiderable of them, contributes, in Conjunction with the rest, more or less, for the Behoof and Benefit of the whole Body: And assuredly the same Reason holds, as to Bodies politick, or of whatsoever Nature they may be. *Cor. 4.* True Morality must then assuredly prove a great Blessing to Mankind. Societies of all Sorts would flourish, and be strengthened by a Conduct, and Improvement of this Kind: Whereas, upon the contrary, they gradually decay, and are carried to Ruin, when such as belong unto them, and especially they who have the Rule and Oversight of them, are wholly swayed by private and selfish Views, without any due Regard unto the publick Good. And I know not any one Thing that more discrediteth Religion, and strengtheneth the Prejudices of Libertines and Atheists more against it, than when a selfish, unjust, unkindly, and an unprofitable Conversation, is covered with a great and specious Profession of Religion. It cannot escape to give sad Umbrage in this Matter, that Persons who pretend much higher, should be unable to stand, and would be casten as useless and hurtful at such a Bar, as even the Glimmerings of Nature might suffice to erect.

Axiom 4. *It is in no Case just and lawful, to have our Minds * evil affected towards our Neighbour.* I mean, it is contrary to Reason, and an Ineroachment upon moral Equity, to entertain the least Inclination towards his Hurt, or to omit, yea, and even to be remiss in wishing his Good, and endeavouring to promote it in all possible Ways; and that because of Resentments we entertain upon the Account of Provocations given us by him. For Explication of this Maxim, please consider, 1st, That (which was before observed) the Law states our Duty, as otherwise, so particularly in all that is incumbent upon us towards our Neighbour; and the Obligation we are under to perform these Duties, hath no Dependence upon his Deportment towards us. 2^{dly}, Howsoever Injuries done to us by him, do indeed render the Performance of the Offices of Love and Kindness due to him, proportionally difficult; yet this is intirely owing unto the Perverseness of our Natures. Notwithstanding, as the pretended, or real Injuries, do not in the least impair the Obligation that's upon us, as aforesaid, so they render these kindly Offices the more disinterested and generous. 3^{dly}, The excellent and golden Rule of *Benignity* and *Equity* (mentioned in a former Axiom) holdeth equally here, viz. We ought

* Jam. 5. 9. Est. 5. 13. 1 Kings 11. 4. Gal. 5. 26.

ought to deal with others, as we have just Warrant to desire that they should deal with us; assuredly none of us can well endure that our Neighbour should entertain any Rancour against us, and we are ready to think our selves injured, so far as we are brought to suffer by him in this Manner, at least we think we have good and just Causes to desire, that he would wholly lay aside his evil Mind towards us; and therefore we ought to have the like Consideration of him, and do owe him the same Tendernefs which we would desire to be shewed to us in our own Case. 4thly, Secret Grudges, Rancour, Irritation, and Heart-Risings, whether against God or Man, are intrinsically, or in their own Nature, *moral Evils*; and therefore no pretext can justifie them. Whatever we may alledge to have been provoking unto us, can never amount to a Reason for what is evil in it self, and therefore must continue so to be, so long as it hath a Being. Our Pretexts and Apologies can never alter the Nature of Things. Prudence requires that we be aware of trusting these who deceive us, and we have no cause for a *complacential* Love, where the Object doth not challenge it; but nothing can be justly excepted against a Love of *Benevolence* and Compassion. So much shall suffice for the 4th Maxim.

Axiom 5. *The Recreations and Pleasantries of Life, of whatsoever Nature, ought still to be such*

as come within the Compass of the perfect Rule. Allow me to add another Branch, which might be a distinct *Axiom*, but for brevities Sake, and in regard it belongeth to the same Purpose, I shall take in with the preceeding, viz. *These Recreations ought never to interfere † with the weighty and serious Business of Life*: They should wholly Vail to these weighty Matters, whereunto they must not only be subordinated, but also subservient. For opening this complex Maxim, (which I presume needs no Proof) I offer the following Notes, 1st, The Perfection of the Rule contained in the *ten Words*, (of which before) doth necessarily bear, that it must extend unto every Concern of Life. Our great Law-giver has left none of them without the Verge of this perfect Law, and forasmuch as the recreative Parts do, amongst others, challenge their own regular Consideration, they must needs come within the Compass of that adequate Rule. Hence 2^{dly}, The Nature, Dignity, and proper Work of reasonable Creatures, do all declare, that *Diversiſion* and Sport, (or whatever Name you give it) may not justly be made the Business of any Man; it is for more noble Ends, and a more excellent Work, that our Maker has given us a rational Being, neither will the Light of Nature, or just and unbiassed Reason allow, that too much either of Strength or Time shall be bestowed upon Recreations;

† 1 Cor. 10. 31. Col. 3. 17.

creations ; our Souls and Bodies ought to be employed in Work becoming their Lord, agreeable unto our rational Natures, and suiting our several Characters and Stations. It is true the Bow cannot be still in Bent, our Frailties both in Body and Mind, require the slackening that Intenfeness for a Time, which otherwise is necessary for plying Affairs of Weight, and more especially such wherein the mind is employed chiefly, nevertheless, even the faint Light of Reason declares, that whatsoever is recreative should be entirely calculated, for advancing the more serious, and important Business of Life. 3dly, No Recreation then, may in the least intrench upon, or be prejudicial unto Things *sacred*. All Reason condemns whatsoever is unsuitable unto the profound Veneration that's due unto a Diety, or hath in the Nature of the Thing any Tendency to undispense us for the Acknowledgments we owe unto the God of Glory, whether by more direct Worship, or throughout the Strain of our Conversation. They come into the Account of Profaneness, and approach towards Blasphemies, which incroach upon Things of so excellent a Nature ; and therefore, may not be reckoned just Pleasantries. The reverential Awe we should have to a Diety, I presume is so clear to any sober, and unbiassed Mind, that such will be at no Demure, towards condemning whatsoever hath an hurtful Influence thereupon, as *Irreligious* or *Profane*.

fane. 4thly, The same *Axiom* also bears, that Recreations, and Diversions, as well as other Busineses of Life, should be adjusted unto the great End, and other subordinate Aims we are required to propose unto our selves. None of these Recreations are just, which (as we are stated) have in their Nature a Tendency to feed, and strengthen the * *Vanity of our Minds*, or to prove Incentives unto any *Lust*. Right Reason demands, that they be Helps, and Adminicles to *Vertue*, and not Cherishers of *Vice*, or of any malign Influence that Way. In a Word, Religion and Reason require, that all the Recreations of Life should be both of that Nature, and also confined within these Limits, which render them profitable, being of use to dispose us for the great Business of Life, both as to Worship and Conversation, and in nothing prejudicial unto that which is sacred, and serious in the Concerns of our several Stations. Were I inclined to dilate this Head, I have a large Field opened for detecting the Unreasonableness, as well as other Enormities of many Things, which are in Vogue amongst the Pleasures of Life, as the most generally esteemed *Plays, Comedies, Tragedies*, and other such Stuff, wherein many Wickednesses are represented in an alluring Dress, and cloathed

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* Eph. 4. 17. Tit. 3. 3.

with polite, and enticing Characters. The towering Pride, and other exorbitant Affections, and Passions, with a manifold Fewel of vain, and corrupt Minds, are painted out with such Colours, and set in such Postures therein, as are most exactly fitted to recommend them; whereas they ought, and Reason challengeth, that they should be had in a just Detestation. I might also enlarge upon the Incroachments which are made therein, upon Matters most serious, and sacred; for, if any Thing that hath the least Relation unto Piety be thought fit to come in, it is for the most Part (in the present State of these Shows, and Interludes) rather adjusted to a recommending of *Heathenism*, than fitted for any End, or Use truly religious. But I enter not upon a Purpose which many great Men have most fully treated. The same Maxim might also lead me to a detecting the Unreasonableness of *vain Talkings*, * *foolish Jestings*, and whatsoever else belongs unto a *vain Conversation*. I enter not into this Puddle; these Vanities and Wickednesses cannot stand at the Bar of the forementioned *Axiom*, and so do run cross unto Reason. Should I enter upon a Detail of the Contrarieties, I am afraid I would find the Field too large; and therefore, I shall only remind you of one
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* Eph. 5. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 18.

Matter of Fact, that is sufficiently known from the concurring Histories of primitive Times, namely that Persons come to Age, and who were received by Baptism into the Bosom of the Church did, together with their Heathenism, solemnly abjure the Devil, with his *Pomp vain Shows*, and other such Trumpery, as belonging unto his Kingdom; and unworthy of *Christians*. So much for the 5th Maxim.

Axiom 6th, No Persons whatsoever, ought to come under such Regards, or be so far considered † by us, as to procure a swerving from the way of Duty enjoined by this Law, from the Considerations we have of them in any Respects, or from Prospects of whatsoever Nature we may have about them, or any Thing we think performable by them. For illustrating this Maxim, the following Assertions may be pondered. 1. I freely and heartily acknowledge, that in our Business and Managements amongst Men, all just Considerations of Persons ought to be had, as they are diversly circumstanced, and variously related to us. *Honour* is to be cheerfully and willingly given * unto them to whom it is due, according to their diverse Places, Qualities, Stations, and the Relations wherein we stand towards them. Moreover, right Reason shews that we ought in † Love to serve one another, and and to use every * lawful and proper Mean,

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both

† *Ist.* 2. 22. *Gal.* 1. 10. *1 Cor.* 7. 23. * *Rom.* 13. 7.
 † *Gal.* 5. 13. * *1 Cor.* 9. 19, 20, 21.

both for engaging our Neighbours into the Ways of Virtue, and also for procuring and maintaining Friendship with them. It is also an Effect of Christian Prudence to gain in just and generous Ways the Favour of these who are Persons of Worth, and may be useful unto us. In one Word, a *humane*, † *affable*, and *gaining Deportment*, is both a Duty and Ornament, and also of manifold Usefulness in Life. Notwithstanding 2. The *Authority of the great and only Law-giver our sovereign Lord*, challengeth so much of Regard from every rational Creature, that our Duty in its whole Compass, and in every circumstanced Case, is to be determined by the Interposition of his Authority, and only thereby. Nothing besides that, may justly come under any Consideration, as decisive, and stating either Sin or Duty. 3. Reason then saith, as well as Religion demandeth, that in all and each of the Concernments of Truth and Error, Equity and Iniquity, and in every Affair that belongs unto Piety towards God, or Justice and Mercy towards Man, the Nature of Right and Wrong should be examined and pondered with such Impartiality, as if at that very Moment we were to account to the *righteous Judge of the whole Earth*, and with as little Regard to any Person or Party, and in particular to these who
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† Jam. 3. 17.

otherwise might Byass us the wrong Way, as if they never had been in the World.

Axiom. 7th. Moral Evil is the † worst of Evils. Penal Evil is indeed straitning, and affects us deeply, but as inflicted by the *righteous Judge*, it is good, and carrieth his Stamp upon it. It is a notable Mean for displaying and vindicating his lesed Honour, and is often necessary, and useful for the good of these who thereby suffer. However, the Lord * *maketh himself known thereby*, and his Work in this, and in every thing else is *honourable † and glorious*. But for what concerns *Moral Evil*, that's wholly and only Evil, and hath nothing of Good in it : Besides, that it's striking against the Majesty of an infinitely glorious God, rendereth it in a Sort of an infinite Enormity. For further Illustration of this *Maxim*, I subjoin the following *Corrolaries*, or *Consequences*. 1. It is plainly connected with this *Axiom*, and even inlaid with it that the Detection of *Moral Evils* in us, together with the Sources from whence they proceed, and every thing else belonging to them, and a warning us faithfully and honestly, according to the Exigences thereof, such dealing I say, must needs be an Office not only of real Kindness, but also of the most true and greatest Friendship, and when it is performed from sincere

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Love,

† Isa. 1. 4. 6. Rom. 7. 23, 24. * Ps. 9. 16. † Ps. 111. 3.

Love, it ought to be valued highly. Nothing should excite higher Strains of Thankfulness, both to God and Man, than such Expressions of real Tendernefs and Kindnefs. A Treatment of this Kind, as to what concerns the Body and outward Estate, would be justly looked upon with such an Eye by every wise Person, and assuredly this honest Dealing, as to what concerns the Soul, is a Benefit so much the greater, that the Soul's Worth is incomparably beyond that of the Body, and outward Estate, and the exercise of Love, in the fore-mentioned Events is truly the more generous, that it may readily be presumed much, if not intirely disinterested: For tho' such Offices be in reality the most friendly, as of a Tendency to deliver us from the greatest of Evils: Yet they are rarely entertained with Kindnefs, and do ordinarily excite the highest Displeasure, and heaviest Resentments, tho' yet truly they are the most obliging Offices. 2. Forasmuch as *Moral Evils* are undoubtedly the greatest, not to be compared, or put on a Level with any other, it is contrary to Reason for any Person so to Balance them with Troubles whatsoever, as to give Way unto, or entertain the least Motion, or Inclination towards a going into the choice of any thing that's Evil *morally*, when the Competition betwixt *Sin* and *Suffering* is ordered in sovereign and wise Providence. In no Case may the least *Moral Evil* (if

(if any such Evil may be called little) be chosen as a just Expedient for eviting the greatest of Troubles. So much for *Moral Axioms*. A greater Number might have been assigned, and I question not but some more of them have occurred to you, or may be found out upon a further Search. Notwithstanding, I shall rest satisfyed with these which I have mentioned, and I expect they will abundantly suffice for supporting the Structure I design to raise upon them. I intend by the following *Missives*, to institute an ingenuous Comparison betwixt humane Nature in its present State, and the little Abstract of Moral Piety and Equity I formerly laid down. In this I design to be Brief: But do resolve to dwell some longer upon the *Axioms*, and I doubt not but that in the Issue, it will be made to appear incontrollably that the Nature of Man, as now stated, is cross, and contrary to the one and other. I add no more at the Time, but that I remain, &c.

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L E T T E R VI.

*Containing a Comparison betwixt humane Nature,
and some Parts of the Abstract of Morality,
before-mentioned.*

SIR,

I Presume our Way is now prepared for a more near Approach to the main Design of this Correspondence, *viz.* To bring the present State of humane Nature unto the Touch-stone of incontestèd Morality, as before set down, both in the Abstract and *Axioms*. I think not that any sober Person will entertain the least Jealousy about the Solidity and Strength of the Foundation; and therefore I may, with the greater Assurance, proceed to raise the intended Building upon it. Should I touch all the Positions of the Abstract, in Order to this Comparison, it would be a long and laborious Work; and I cannot incline to a launching out into so vast a Sea: Nevertheless, I think it proper to glance at a few Positions, for shewing how easy the Progress might be, in case a more full treating of these Purposes were designed. Please then take Two or Three more clear and obvious Assertions, which I lay down as so many *Postulata*, or *Concessions*, and they may be comprized in a very few Words.

1st. Rea-

1st. Reasonable Creatures are, because *reasonable*, and made fit to know and acknowledge their Lord; because, I say, they are reasonable, they are, upon that very Head, as well as on other Accounts, under the strongest and sweetest Obligations to lay out themselves, under a higher Influence, for attaining so much as is possible of the * *Knowledge* of that God unto whom they intirely owe Life, Breath, and all Things, and to make that their great, leading, and most pleasant Business. It were monstrously absurd for any rational Creature, to deny the Ties which lie upon him, to use every possible Mean for knowing his Lord and Creator; forasmuch as this Knowledge is the Ground-work of whatever is required of him in point of the *Acknowledgements*, *Homage*, and *Obedience*, which are due by Subjects unto the *Prince of the Kings of the Earth*.

2^{dly}, In like Manner I presuppose, that we are all obliged to live under continued Impressions of the most profound † *Veneration* towards him, who is our *Lord*, our *Law-giver*, and *Judge*. However, that *servile Fear*, which procureth a flying from God, and is the Result of *Hatred* and *Aversion*, from a deep Conscience of Guilt; however, I say, that such

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* 1 Chron. 28. 9. Psal. 100. 1, 2, 3. Acts 17. 23. Isa. 43. 10. Deut. 26. 17. † Mal. 3. 16. Ps. 8. throughout. Col. 3. 17. Prov. 28. 14. Jer. 10. 6. Isa. 33. 22.

a Fear, I mean of Aversion and Hatred, ought to be avoided, and we are bound to the uttermost to guard against it; yet a Fear of Reverence is due unto our sovereign Lord throughout every Moment of our Lives.

3dly, We are obliged to take wholly from him all the *Regulations* * which belong to our Worship and Conversation.

4thly, It no less becometh, and is also positively required of us, to be still in a Temper of *cautious* † *Observance*, lest we recede from these *Rules* to the right or left Hand.

So much presupposed, let us ingenuously compare the present State of our Natures with these Obligations, which are so very clear and incontestable. I do indeed lay my Account with the Derision and Banter of *Libertines*, and profane Men, who scarce have any better Tools than sarcastick Jest and Scoffing, whereby to attack Things serious and sacred. But, as they who have Eyes to see, regard not the Quibblings of blind Men about the Light and Colours, nor do they call in Question what they perceive plainly, because of such Fooleries; so no judicious and sober Person will entertain the least Doubtfulness about clear Matter of Fact, upon the Account of the pitiful Shifts, and weak Pretexts of brutish Men,
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* Deut. 32. 46, 47. Mat. 28. 20. Acts 2. 42. 1 Tim. 6. 13, 14, &c. † Psal. 16. 8. & 89. 7. Gen. 17. 1, 2.

(however they may be esteemed Wits) who know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. And, as before, I shall set down some, some scriptural Passages upon the Margine. Our Libertines may, and whether they will or not, yet an impartial Heathen would allow the Scriptures to be competent Witnesses of Matter of Fact, when the Facts are otherwise sufficiently made out, and confirmed by continued Tracts of harmonious Experience. Hereupon, without any Amusement, from the empty Captions of weak Men, I go streight on to the intended Comparifon; and, according to the *Postulata*, or *Concessions* just now laid down, a very melancholly View displayeth it self, with much lamentable Evidence. And, with Reference to the first *Concession*, I observe the following Strains of our deep Corruption.

1st, So far are we from pressing after the utmost attainable Knowledge of the true God, in Ways, and by Means which he hath laid down, and made conveniently accessible to us, and from looking upon it as our Happiness, that upon the quite contrary, the strong Current of the Malignity of our Nature carrieth our Thoughts intirely off from that Excellent Object. *God is not † in all our Thoughts* (or all our Thoughts are *no God*, as the Original bears) the strong propensions of Corruption in us, would utterly exterminate all just and right

† Ps. 10. 4. & 14. 1. & 53. 1.

right Thoughts of a Deity. *We like not to retain*
** God in our Knowledge*, and are very far from
 centering in him, as the pleasant Seat of our
 Thoughts and Concernments, howsoever highly
 rational, such a Temper and Way will be
 found.

2dly, The more excellent, proper, and refined
 Impressions of a Deity (to which also the
 Light of Nature giveth its Suffrage) are in
 our present State the chief Matter of our Aversion.
 That God is ** holy*, a Being (shall I so
 express it) altogether pure, and spotless, and
 who *hateth all Iniquity*, and that he is the *righteous*
 † *Judge of the whole Earth*, with more of
 the like Nature, no Man will call in Question,
 who hath not intirely renounced Reason and
 Conscience; nevertheless, corrupt Nature is so
 far from taking the least Complacency in a
 Deity, with a due Regard to the fore-mentioned,
 and other the like Excellencies, that
 upon the contrary, they are the Matter of its
 keenest Aversion. Whensoever just Impressions
 of his Holiness, and that he is the righteous
 Judge of all the Earth, are carried in upon the
 Conscience, and convincing Views of our Obnoxiousness
 unto righteous Punishment, are set
 home with Power, we are far from taking any
 Pleasure in a just and holy God, we really hate
 him, and (were it possible) we would fly from
 him

† Rom. 1. 18, 28. Eph. 2. 12. * Ps. 5. 4, 6. Rev.
 4. 8. † Gen. 18. 25. Joh. 5. 22, 27.

him, instead of prostrating our selves before him, *and *making Supplication to our Judge*. The Glimmerings of Nature, and Experience of the same Kind, give some dark Views of this; but scriptural Light † setteth it in a full Evidence.

3dly, In particular it is manifest even by the weak Taper of Nature's Glimmerings, and no sober Person, Christian or Heathen denies it, namely, That God is the sovereign Lord, and hath full and incontrollable Right (shall I so express it) to dispose of all and every one of his Creatures, as seemeth good unto him; no *Man debateth the Matter. Let us now ingenuously compare Mankind as stated at present, with this evident and indisputable Truth, and it will manifestly appear, that our Natures are now of a Mould directly contrary thereunto; which Truth yet is so manifest, that it may be reckoned an *Axiom*. This, in general Terms, admits of no Dispute; every one will readily grant, that it becomes the Clay to ly at the Potter's Feet; and that it is a Behaviour suited to a Creature indued with Reason, to prostrate it self before a sovereign Lord, to be disposed by him according to his Pleasure, in every Thing, without Exception or Reserve, at least it is our incontestable Duty so far to honour our sovereign and just Lord, as to acknowledge he may do so, yet humbly and earnestly intreating that

* Job. 9. 15. † Gen. 3. 8. Job 21. 14, 15. John 5. 19, 20, &c. Luke 19. 14, &c. * Mat. 20. 13, 14, 15.

that the * Disposal may be for good ; but the Set of our Spirits is so far contrary, yea and contradictory to this, that all of us would be as † Gods, and do claim the *Disposure* of our * selves both as to Precept and Providence. This appeareth more especially when the *divine Law*, and our Lusts, come into † Competition in circumstanced Cases, and in a peculiar Manner when sovereign and spotless Providence runneth cross to these Ends which we propose, and the Expectations we had intertained. Then it is, that instead of acknowledging our sovereign Lord by Acquiescence in the *revealed Decree*, and stooping * quietly under his Displeasures, our Hearts are filled with Reluctancies and Rebellions, which belch out into manifold Repinings and Rage, more † covered or open, and chiefly when our Straits are carried towards an extreme Height, and no Issue from them for the Time appeareth. But not to enlarge upon a sad Matter of Fact, which hath as many Witnesses in the main, as there are Persons upon the Face of the Earth, and is acknowledged and lamented by all, who are under any Concernment about their immortal Souls. I only add

4thly, That howsoever Reason plainly saith, that Ignorance of a Deity in any, and yet much more

* Judges 10. 15. † Gen. 3. 8. * Psal. 12. 4. † Psal. 2. 3. * Psal. 39. 9. 1 Sam. 3. 18. 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26, &c. † Isa. 8. 21. 1 Cor. 10. 10.

more in these who enjoy the most desirable Means for Knowledge, such Ignorance, I say, giveth the greatest Causes of just and heavy Regret; so much I think is beyond Debate: As also, that it is a Matter of the highest Import, and a most just Concern and Interest of reasonable Creatures to have their Sentiments and Impressions concerning the God of Glory well adjusted to the Discoveries he hath given of himself, of whatsoever Nature they may be: Yet sad and incontestable Experience verifieth, that many Thousands, and sundry of these in Repute, who likewise have access to the choicest Means of Instruction, do yet live securely in gross Darknes and Ignorance, not only without just Notions concerning a Deity, but also under a strong Aversion from, and Enmity against the clearest † Means for attaining Light. Many also, and some of the greatest Note amongst Men, are so far under the Sway of their Lusts, as to take up securely, and to settle upon such Notions and *Sets of Religion*, both as to Doctrine and Practice, which they find most agreeable to these Lusts, and do think will best suit their *secular Interests* without further Inquiry, or giving the least Intertainment unto any Motion leading that way, as if Religion were nothing else but a *politick Engine*, or *Machine*. From this Source it

† Hof. 4. 1, 2. John 3. 19, 20. 2 Tim. 4. 3. 1f. 30. 9, 10, 11.

it is, that great and unaccountable Blunders in religious Matters are maintained by whole Societies, and propagated from one Generation to another in a long Tract of Succession, and the least Motion towards a detecting, and reforming of these, is often opposed, and crushed by the higher Powers, not much, if at all, at least not still from the Conviction of Duty, but merely lest a political, tho' wicked Repose, should be disturbed. So much as a Touch at what relates to the first *Postulatum*, or Conclusion mentioned in the Beginning of this Missive.

I go on to the 2^d, Namely, that reasonable Creatures are under the clearest and strongest Obligations to have and maintain an habitual Impression of *Reverence*, to that God, who is the * *God of Glory*, and whose glorious Excellencies challenge so much. Besides, that our Breath is in his Hand, and every Thing that concerns us, is intirely at his Disposure. None, can call in Question the Obligation that lieth upon us hereunto, unless he deny all Reason, and go deliberately, and willfully, against it. The scriptural Doctrine about this Matter, is most purely rational, I need not enlarge thereupon, a Touch may suffice, the Thing being incontestible. *To fear God, and to keep his Commandments*, is the All of Man,
Thus

* Acts 7. 2. Psal. 29. 1, 2, &c.

Thus the Original hath it, *It is the beginning of Wisdom: Unto Man the Lord saith * the fear of the Lord is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding.* Let us then fairly compare the present State of humane Nature (before that great and merciful Change, of which in the Sequel.) Let us, I say, compare our present State, with plain and incontestable Duty in this Matter, and it will be found as evident as any Fact can be, that this is not the natural Set, and Bent of our Spirits, and that our native Propension goeth the quite contrary way with a mighty Current. I do indeed confess, that sudden Displays of the Majesty of God, Providences alarming by somewhat great and unusual, and other such Occurrences apart, or together, will procure and impress the Spirit with some Awfulness, but this is of a very transitory Nature, it cometh quickly and goeth speedily off, *like a Morning Cloud, and the early Dew:* But so remote are we from a rooted Habit of Veneration for the Majesty of God, as the *leading Principle of Life*, which yet right Reason doth plainly demand, so far are we, I say, from having this as the first and chief Principle of Motion influencing our Worship and Walk, that we don't so much as understand such a Temper of Spirit. And, according to the poor and empty Notions we

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have

* Job. 28. 28. Eccl. 12. 13. Ps. 111. 10. Prov. 1. 7. & 9. 10. &c.

have of it, Nature accounts it an intolerable Bondage. Reason and Scripture require, that no Intertainment be given to the least irreverent Thought of the God of Glory, or to the least Motion or Inclination unsuitable to his glorious Excellencies; No rational Creature without the greatest Violence done to Reason, can debate the Obligation here, and yet the real Echo, or true Return we hereunto give, is this in sum, *It is a hard saying, who can bear it?* I acknowledge that some there are whose Life and Element it is, to be still impressed with this holy, humble and reverential Fear: Nevertheless, as this is wholly and only owing to a supernatural Change and Influence, without which it neither is, nor can be kept up, even for a Moment, so Nature in these excellent Persons, when left to it self, declineth quickly to its old Byass. So much for the 2d Concession. I shall for brevities sake knit the 3d and 4th together, viz. That it becomes us to take from our sovereign Lord, and to submit unto whatsoever Rules he hath prescribed to us for modelling our Worship, and regulating our Conversation, and are obliged to a cautious observance of our Hearts, and Way, lest we transgress these Rules: I cannot expect that any reasonable Man will question the Truth and Equity of this *Postulatum*, and the Scriptures declare the Matter so fully and pointedly, that it were superfluous to enter upon the

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Demonstration of a Position, which is so very plain, *viz. That God is to be worshipped * and served only in the way he himself hath prescribed.* It's proper that we next compare the present State of humane Nature, with this Concession, and the following Particulars will afford us heavy Views. 1. We quickly weary to keep Touches with the Lord, as to his Institutions of whatsoever Kind; plain Experience hath discovered the irregular Sett of our Natures in all Ages since the beginning of the World. The Account which the God of the Spirits of all Flesh hath given concerning us, is continually verified by innumerable Recessions from the prescribed Rule, namely, that tho' *God made Man upright, † yet he hath sought out many Inventions*, and continueth to do so. 2. The purest Societies have never kept their Integrity for any considerable measure of Time, every Age is Fertile of *Compliances and Accommodations*, whereby the Lord's Truths, and Worship have been corrupted, and the Conversations of Men polluted and poysoned. 3. Deceitful and wicked Hearts have prompted many to Stretches, beyond all just and modest Boundaries, whether in compliance with an ** itching Humour*, and other Lusts, or for accomodating themselves in what they thought to be the Exigences of their *secular Interests*, that a particular

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* Mat. 15. 9. Isa. 29. 13. Col. 2. 23. † Eccl. 7. 8, 9. * 2 King. 12. throughout. 2 Tim. 4. 2.

ticular Enarration might cover us with Blushes:

4. I might appeal to the sedate Thoughts and afflicting Reflections of the best of Men, whether they find the natural Byass exceeding strong for carrying them off from the Rule, notwithstanding all the Restraints our sovereign Lord hath laid upon us, and contrary unto that sincere Approbation, and hearty Respect thereunto, with which the Lord has endued them. In one Word I must say, They are utter Strangers unto themselves, who know not the mighty Propension of Nature to Irregularities, which the choicest of Men, notwithstanding the utmost Caution, do never wholly escape. So much for the Comparison of humane Nature, with the moral Abstract. I remain, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

Containing a Comparison of the present State of humane Nature, with the moral Axioms.

SIR,

M^Y last gave some Touches at comparing the State of Mankind with the little Abstract of Morality I had represented in some former Missives. I go on now to the *moral Principles*, or *Maxims*, and intend to ply the Comparison in that Part
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somewhat more closely. Please review them in the same Order wherein I had set them down: I am not anxious about Method, which no doubt might have been adjusted better than I have done, or can do.

The first of these Principles was this, *viz.* *Whatsoever we have just Cause to think that others should do to us, we are obliged to deal in the same manner with them, See Missive IV. Axiom I. with the Exposition and Corrolaries.* Let us then make a fair and ingenuous Comparison of humane Nature, with that plain Maxim, and it will be found utterly degenerated from, and contrary thereunto. I shall not accomplish a diligent Search to find out this, nor do I incline to dilate upon it; a few of many particulars may be considered. *1st,* We are now intirely off from these Regulations, the God of our Being hath given, and enjoined us, with Respect to our selves. Sundry of these I have mentioned before, and love not to repeat. In summ, it's manifest that we are not our own, but do belong unto God as his Creatures, and therefore our Love to, and Care of our selves ought not to be Arbitrary, but must be conformed to the Rule which our sovereign Lord hath prescribed us. All centereth chiefly here, *viz.* The just Concernment we should be under as to our selves, consists in a pointing aright towards our

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Lord and Maker, as our *ultimate* † *End*, and pressing towards that End under Heavens Influences, with all possible Vigour. And forasmuch as we are required to bear the like tender Regard to our Neighbour, it followeth inavoidably that we are obliged to show it, in laying out our selves to persuade him, and to be otherwise Assistant to him, as we can have access towards his pointing aright to that great End, and pressing accordingly after it. Other Regards, whether to our selves or our Neighbours, are Destructive, and Self-seeking, otherwise, is but Self-destroying *. Let us hereupon institute the Comparison, and I may appeal to the Conscience of any sober Person, whether this be the present Mould of humane Nature, namely in all the Concernments about our selves and our Neighbours, to be regulated by the Regards we ought to have to the great End, and to every just Mean which leads thereunto. Assuredly the Stream and Current runs generally out in a quite other and contrary Channel. *We make Provision for the Flesh*, we serve diverse Lusts and Pleasures in our own Persons †, and do accordingly carry others alongst with us to the like Evils. Were it not so, the World would be an *Eden* of excellent Virtues, and pleasant Delights, whereas upon

† Mat. 6. 21. 33. Ps. 27. 4. Luk. 10. 42. Ps. 73.
24. * Hos. 13. 9. 2 Tim. 3. 1. † Rom. 13. 14. Tit.
3. 3.

on the contrary, it is (with very little of Exception) a Chaos of Wickedness and Troubles.

2. It is a Debt every one would readily think to be due unto himself, or at least all of us judge we have good reason, and are not in the wrong to desire that *Bowels* † of *Kindness* and *Compassion* be extended towards us, and Help afforded us, as our Necessities and Troubles, of whatsoever Nature may require, and in so far as, it can be within the reach of our Neighbours to assist us. This sure, is a most just Demand, founded upon right Reason, every one is persuaded of so much in his own Case, and the *Axiom* clearly bears, that the very same good Offices are due by him to his Neighbour. Let us now compare herewith the present State of Mankind, and the Comparison will give us most dismal Views. I might instance in diverse particulars, but that would carry me too far : Take only these two. 1st, Tho' every one doth challenge effectual Compassion as a just Debt to himself, yet degenerated and corrupt Self-love is in many so very strong, that such Compassion towards our Neighbours, is little found, and expressed; where, besides the more common Relation of Neighbourhood, the nearest Tyes whether of Nature, Blood, and Affinity, or other such, do

† Job. 6. 14. Col. 3. 12, 13. Ps. 41. 1, 2, 3. Job. 19. 21. &c.

do manifestly require it. *Natural Affection* is frequently subdued and swallowed up by Lusts, and besides its great Weakness which hindereth its going any just Length; it is casten off † by many, and giveth place to its Contraries. 2d, When true, and sometimes heroical Virtue conflicteth with great Straits, the Purity of Reason would say, That all possible and compassionate Assistances are a just Debt unto it, upon the most virtuous, honourable, and generous Accounts. A Person so happily endued and stated, would be but too ready to think that more of Help is due unto him than he can reasonably expect. To be sure the Indigencies which often accompany true Piety, ought to be look'd to in a peculiar manner. Nevertheless the most part of Mankind is so far wanting to such noble Exigences, that they will be found utterly destitute * of that *Kindness* and *Tenderness*, when the Secrets of all Mens Hearts shall be judged at the great accounting Day. *I was Sick and in Prison, and ye visited me not, &c.* I need not insist upon a plain Head. Moreover 3d, Were it not from unaccountable wants of this Compassion and Tenderness (which yet every one thinketh due unto himself) the Distresses in the World would be at least very few in Comparison of what they really are. If the Food, or rather Fewel of Lusts,

† Rom. 1. 31. 2 Tim. 3. 1, 2, 3, &c. * Mar. 25. 42, 43.

Lusts, were imployed for charitable, just, and generous Uses, and if Men would satisfy themselves with the true Exigences of Necessity and Decency, suitable to their several Stations : And especially did each of us lay out himself to be as useful unto others, in his Station as possibly he can, all real Indigencies might be supplied conveniently, and (excepting Judgments extraordinary) no Persons needed to want what's needful, and the dint even of extraordinary Strokes would at least be much lessened. The *Axiom* under View will bear all that I have said, and yet much more. Every Person in Straits would think it a just Desire that his Neighbour not only abridge himself in his Superfluities, but also make some stretch even in Necessaries, rather than that his Fellow rational Creature should perish. So much we think owing to us, and the very same do we owe to others. Thus the Miseries which abound in the World, do issue in a great part, from the want of that Sympathy which every Body would think the most just Debt in his own Case, and the scriptural Doctrine in the Matter is highly Rational, viz. *Whoso hath this Worlds * Goods, and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* So much for Instances upon the 2d Particular. I add but a 3d Branch of

* 1 Joh. 3. 17. Jam. 2. 15, 16. Luk. 3. 11. &c.

of Comparifon, wherewith I conclude what I intend to represent upon the firft *Axiom*.

It's manifeft that each of us would think the Defire moft juft in fuch circumftanced Cafes of our own, as requires it, *viz.* That no Perfon take any Advantage againft us, and to our Hurt, from Weaknefs and Slips on our Part, through Inadvertancy, and otherwife : As alfo that no Handle be taken againft us from any humane Laws, or Conftitutions, to the Prejudice of that, which upon the ftrictelt, and moft impartial Inquiry, we would think, as before God, to be material, and moral Juftice in our Concerns. And in cafe our Neighbour poffeffes what's ours, and to which he hath no Title valid, before the Lord, we would juftly think that Juftice and Confcience require a Reftitution in fuch Cafes, and the Scripture is clear, *Luk. xix. 8. Exod. xxii. 1.* The fame Meafure then is due by us unto our Neighbours, according to the Maxim. The Scriptures are full of the fweeteft Strains of *material Juftice*, unto which it is moft proper that humane Laws do vail, † *The Fruit of the Spirit is in all Righteoufnefs, and Goodnefs, and Truth. He hath fhewed thee, O Man, what is Good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juftly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God, &c. &c.* Let us now herewith compare the general Set of Mankind, and the
many

† Eph. 5. 9. Mic. 6. 8. Tit. 2. 11, 12. Gal. 5. 22. &c.

many unjust, unmerciful, and ungenerous Practices, which abound not only with the more openly wicked, but are also found amongst these who have the fairest Profession, and a multitude of *crooked Ways*, and manifold Stretches, contrary to all this, have not only filled the World, but even the Churches of Christ, as the Ruins declare, with such Evidence, that it would afford a large Field for heavy Lamentation; but I love not to enter upon such a melancholy Subject. I now go on to the *2d Axiom, Letter IV.* It's there expressed at some length, and amounts in a Word to this namely, *The Measure of our Duty to God and Man, is the Declaration of Right which our sovereign Lord and Law-giver has given, and not his Providence, nor the Deportment of our Neighbour towards us.* Two or three Things are inlaid with this Principle, which I must touch in a Word, in order to the Comparison.

1. It is our positive and indispensable Duty to go straight foreward in the Ways of Christian Virtue, and to be continually in the exercise thereof, whatsoever Disadvantages may attend it, or Troubles assault us in the Practice thereof.

2. Howsoever *Moral Evil* may be accompanied with external Advantages, and be even encompassed with all possible Motives of that Kind, to encourage it, and whatsoever may appear

pear to depend upon any Practice of that Sort, tho' it were of the greatest Weight, either as to a prosperous, or adverse Estate; yet upon no account whatsoever, may we engage, into what we know is Evil, or be remiss and indifferent, and far less may we intertain the least Aversion from a just Inquiry.

3dly, However we be injured by others, and whatsoever Afflictions they may put us to suffer; yet the Maxim sheweth, that our Obligation remains firm, and untainted unto all possible good Offices towards them. The *Axiom* bears all this, and so it's founded upon firm and manifest Reason. The † Scriptures are also clear and copious in the Matter. Let us then compare Mankind, as presently stated, with these incontrollable Strains of true Morality, and the Views cannot escape to be afflicting. Two or three Things are of most humbling Consideration here. 1. True and generous Love to Virtue, with courageous and resolute Adventures, in the Practice thereof, and that in the Face of the greatest Opposition, and amidst Wants, Dangers, and Troubles, &c. such Adventures, I say, are very rare, even amongst the politest Sets of Mankind. And tho' we have some few unusual Examples of such as have gone * considerable Lengths that

† Mat. 5. 44. Rom. 12. 19, 20, 21. Prov. 25. 21. Psal. 35. 13. * 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3. 2 Pet. 2. 20.

that Way, or rather in what appeared to be such, partly by the uneasy Constraints of Light, and Conviction, and also from the Prospects which they raised of a more refined Sort of Honour; yet all this is rather mere Shew, than Substance, in Regard it amounteth no further than to an Exchange of Vices; for true Love to Virtue is wanting all this While †. Nevertheless, as such Stretches are but seldom found; so generally our weak Spirits do either decline to the Paths of Vice, or do utterly faint in the Practice of true and Christian Virtue, when it is put to Conflict with great Discouragements. Assuredly, without a supernatural and special Influence, and sweet Views of the * eternal Rewards of Grace, these cross Tides will carry us far out of the pleasant Ways of Truth, and Duty. This sure goeth against Reason, and is manifestly contrary unto the clear † scriptural Prescripts. 2. When moral Evils flatter us with the Promises of Immunity from Trouble, and a Variety of other Advantages, it is too too manifest to any impartial Observer, how corrupt Nature is wholly bent to toss, turn, and rack its Invention for specious Colours, either to *adorn* these Paths of Vice, or at least so far as is possible to cover their Deformity. The Arts of Hell are almost

† 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. * Ps. 73. 24, 25. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Ps. 17. 15. 1 Thess. 4. 17, 18, † Mat. 5. 11, 12. Jam. 1. 2. 1 Pet. 4. 11, 12. Act. 5. 41, &c.

almost untraceable, whereby we either keep, or shut out *convincing Light*, while we are mad upon the Defence of the evil Practices upon which we are set, and do promise to our selves to find our Account therein. Somewhat more belonging to this, will come in as conveniently upon a following *Axiom*; and therefore I proceed to the 3d *Maxim*, Letter 5th, at the Beginning, *viz. In the Business of Life, more publick Good should have the Preference to that which is personal and private.* See there the Exposition, with Corrolaries, and Consequences deduced from it, which I repeat not. Only Two Things I must represent, to clear the Comparison; and they are abundantly manifest. 1. It is an unaccountable Evil, and a Sort of atrocious *Murder*, to undermine and destroy Societies; and whatsoever hath a real Tendency that Way, must needs be of the same Nature, so far as it goeth. 2. It is the clear and positive Duty of every one, in their several Stations, to lay out themselves unto the uttermost, for the Benefit of these *Communities* to which they respectively belong. It is manifestly contrary to Reason, that there should be any useless, and far less any hurtful Members amongst them. The Scriptures, and Practices of the Cloud of Witnesses therein recorded, are clear in the Matter, to say nothing of the high, and heroical Strains of *Moses*

ses † and *Paul*, against which our Antagonists might readily except, and cavil, tho' without Ground. We want not other incontest'd Examples of *Christian Heroes*, both recorded in the sacred Oracles, and also otherwise known in History. You know the notable Instances of *Nehemiah, Ezra, David, Mordecai, Daniel*, and his Companions, and many others which I need not specify. We have a large Catalogue *Hebrews xi.* throughout. I insist not on the Purpose; only a View of the State and Managements of Mankind, with Reference to this Maxim, affords a great deal of Matter for heavy Reflection. Please take an Instance or Two, seeing I am unwilling to launch far out, into this troubled Sea. Beyond all Manner of Doubt, Societies of all Sorts have suffered much, and sustained a vast deal of Prejudice in all Ages, by the sacrificing publick Good to private Interests. Hereof I mention a few of many Particulars.

1st, *Publick Service*, both in Church and State, hath often suffered much by an unaccountable Sway of *extrinsical Considerations*, while the Managers of these Matters, or they who had Influence upon them, have procured great Trusts to Persons, neither so fit nor honest, as even a rational Consideration would have discovered to be necessary. Thus much
Good

† *Exod.* 32. 31, 32. *Rom.* 9. 1, 2, 3.

Good has been hindred, and a vast deal of Harm hath been done, merely to gratify Friends. Whereas even Reason would have evinced the clear and manifest Obligation to lay aside all such Considerations, not to allow them so much as a Hearing, and far less to give them a *casting* and *determining Voice* when the Honour of God, and the publick Good of Societies were interested. I might enlarge hereupon, and give particular Instances of great and many Ruins, issued from this Source, but I spare. Only I must say, That the Wickedness is altogether unaccountable, when under various Pretexts, a Sort of Merchandise has been made of the most valuable Interests.

2. In a direct Contrariety to this *Axiom*, such hath been the Regard to Parties at all times; but especially in more corrupt Ages, that the most violent and daring Incroachments have been made upon the plainest Rules of moral Equity, as to *Veracity*, *Beneficence*, *Kindness*, and in many other Regards too long to mention, and all these to strengthen the several *Parties* as the respective Exigences have been thought to require. 3. The most essential and important Concerns of Societies have been neglected, the greatest Services overlooked, and Persons of Note and Worth oppressed and persecuted from Party-views, which often have carried the one and other of these Factions so far from a suitable Concern about the publick

blick Good that whole Communities have
 been ruined, and sometimes fell as a Prey into
 the Teeth of a common Enemy, while the se-
 veral Parties contended about the Manage-
 ment, much as if through the Contest of Sail-
 ors about their private Concerns, the Vessel
 should by Neglect, or a bad Conduct, be suf-
 fered to dash upon Rocks and Shelves, and so
 to perish. Many Stretches of this Sort I
 might mention, but that the Subject is too
 afflictive to be insisted on. 4. It is also owing
 unto the crofeness of our Natures to this plain
 Maxim, that many choice *Talents* which the
 Lord hath given, and ought to be employed
 for publick Good, are yet wickedly and sacri-
 legiously carried off from their proper Uses,
 and the *publick Good*, to serve some one or o-
 ther Party, and in Ways most irregular, and
 immoral into the detail whereof I incline not
 to enter. Let it suffice in a suitableness to the
 Design of these Missives, that the many and
 inaccountable Byasses of our Natures in their
 present State, which carry us off from such a
 Regard to publick Good, as Reason and Scrip-
 ture demand, and the *Axiom* plainly bears such
 a contrary Sway, I must needs say, maketh
 up one great Branch of the Proof of what I
 am demonstrating, *viz.* That our Natures as
 now stated, are contrary to the most just and
 incontestèd Morality. I shall review the re-

manent Maxims *per* next, if the Lord will. I remain, &c.

L E T T E R V I I I.

Wherein the following Axioms are considered.

S I R,

Without any Preface I just proceed. The 4th Principle or *Axiom*, *Missive* V. was, *viz. It is in no Case just and lawful to have our Minds evil affected towards our Neighbour.* See the Exposition and Corrolaries there. We may, I acknowledge, have, and it is reasonable we be impressed with a just Sense and Concernment, about whatever we see to be blame worthy in him, and we may pass a right Verdict upon his Injuriousness to us, in which Event we had need to take care least we deal partially, being readily not very equal Judges in our own Matters. I do also confess that there is scarce any Thing that hath more specious and colourable Pretexts to support it, than the Wickedness which this *Axiom* taxeth, forasmuch as the Business of Life, especially in a corrupt Age, are inevitably accompanied with many provoking Occurrences : Besides that, the Degeneracy of Nature is so exceedingly great, that a Behaviour conformable unto this Maxim, would come generally under the repute

pute of *Meanness of Spirit*, as if the evil affectedness, which the Maxim condemns, together with the Resentments issuing from thence, did pertain unto *Magnanimity* and *greatness of Soul*. But presupposing the very highest of Provocation, and whatsoever else can possibly be alledged, either to defend or extenuate the Evil under View, the Maxim holds, forasmuch as our Duty is still the same, being enjoined by our sovereign Lord, and it is manifestly contrary to right Reason, that we should neglect, fail, or be remiss in the doing of that which is incumbent upon us, whatsoever Provocations or Discouragements from others do fall in our Way. The Scripture are plain, and full in this Matter, as the blessed Company of Orthodox, practical Divines have largely discovered, and was touched before. Let us herewith compare the present State of Mankind, and the Views must needs be afflicting to a sober and Christian Mind. To say nothing of the *Malice* *, *Envy*, *Wars*, *Fightings*, and *Confusions* wherewith Societies of all Kinds are filled and pestered. I only represent a Particular or two, wherein a wicked Byass of our Natures, contrary to this Maxim, pusheth it self forth, even in the best of Men, and wanteth infinite Power to keep it down. 1st, A secret *Displeasure* † with, and

F. 2

Rage

* Tit. 3. 3. Jam. 3. 13, 14. & 4. 1. † Psal. 37. 1.
& 73. 1, 2, 3. Jer. 12. 1, 2. &c.

Rage against the more prosperously Wicked, especially when they get *their wicked Devices brought to pass*, to the prejudice of our Lord's People, and of the Interests of his Kingdom, whereas Reason and Scripture would say, that we ought rather to be moved with *compassionate* * *Sorrow* on their behalf, in regard they are made thereby the riper for Destruction. 2d, A Kind of covered Satisfaction and secret Joy, when Evil befalls them, and they come to be insnared in the Works of their own Hands. It is true, the disposure of Providence to the honour of God, and for the accomplishment of his Word, ought to be observed with Reverence, and *the Lord is known by the Judgments which he executes* †. Nevertheless, seeing the Distresses of the Wicked are just Punishments of their Sin, and do add a great deal unto their Misery, they are on these accounts the greater *Objects of Compassion*; so much the more inaccountable is the Wickedness to take any, even the least Complacency in their Miseries. 3d, In a direct contrariety to the fore-mentioned Maxim, when Prejudices and Alienations upon what we think provoking, do enter upon our Minds, they are readily accompanied more or less with a Peremptoriness, and such as procureth an Aversion from laying them aside (where we affect not) even upon just Information. So
dange-

* Psal. 35. 12, 13, 14. † Ps. 9. 16.

dangerous and hurtful are these Prepossessiones which easily seize upon our wicked Minds, and spread their Roots deep and far in them. So much for the 4th Axiom.

The 5th was this in summ, viz. *The Recreations and Pleasantries of Life, ought all to be suitable to the Rule, and should not interfere with, or be hurtful unto, but ought upon the contrary to be subservient to its serious Business.* See it *Mis-sive V.* at more length, with the Exposition, Corrolaries, and Consequences. I shall only at present offer three plain Notes to found the Comparifon. 1st, Reason it self saith, That we may not make any Thing the Business of Life, which is not Subordinate to the Honour of God, and suitable unto our Nature and Dignity, as being reasonable Creatures indued with immortal Souls, and who shall have to do with a Deity for ever. 2^d, As beyond doubt a lawful Calling is a good Part of the just Business of Life, so it should be managed in a lawful Manner, and in such Ways, as shall render it both worthy of a Creature so dignified, and intirely subservient to higher Ends. 3^d, Nothing then can be reputed justly and rationally Pleasant, unless it be also truly † profitable, as one way or another serving the important Ends and Uses of Life. All this is plain and clearly founded

on Reason. The Scriptures * also are so full and clear in the Matter, that I need not launch out into such a spacious Sea. *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, &c. What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his Ways, and to love him, &c. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve him, &c. Let every † Man wherein he is called therein, abide with God.* I might enlarge to a great Extent in this Matter, did it admit of the least Debate, or were the Labour necessary. Let us rather compare the present State of Mankind with the Maxim in View, and with what I have just now represented as natively resulting from it, and the following Particulars amongst many others will appear as equally clear and lamentable. 1st, I may appeal to the Conscience of any sober Person, whether we really make that the great and chief Business of Life, which the Honour of God, and the Dignity of rational and immortal Souls dwelling in Houses of Clay do strongly demand. I acknowledge that some are in this Regard more excellent than their Neighbours, yet the best will find Cause to be covered with Blushes upon a serious and impartial Reflection. And on this occasion I cannot but regret with all due Respect to Persons of *Distinction*

* Mic. 6. 8. Deut. 10. 12. & 6. 13. Tit 2. 11, 12, 13. † 1 Cor. 7. 24.

stinction for Riches and Honour, that instead of improving the Advantages they enjoy from a more elevated Estate for the Glory of God, and the Benefit of Societies, many of them assume the greater Latitude in gratifying the *Vanity of their Minds*, and serving other Lusts in Ways, and unto Pitches which I love not to mention. It is manifest that the Occasions our sovereign Lord hath bestowed upon them are great, and the Good they might do thro' Grace, by their Authority, Influence, and Example, is very considerable, much beyond what's attainable by others more meanly stated; yet how little these great Talents are improv'd, and how badly they are frequently used, is sadly manifest to these, who lay Matters of that Kind to * Heart. I design not in the least to excuse or extenuate the Iniquities, and Unprofitableness of the lower Seize of People, but sure their Influence, whether good or bad, is not so great nor extensive; yet to the one and other, and chiefly to my own Soul, I must say, That a great deal of that which we make the Business of Life, and spend the Strength of it therein, cannot stand, when try'd, even at the Bar of Reason. And the scriptural Character of such a Conduct is highly rational, namely, † *What Fruit had ye in these Things, whereof ye are now ashamed, for the End of these Things is Death!* 2d, Touching what
was

* Jer. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c. † Rom. 6. 21.

was said concerning the Management of a lawful Calling in Ways subordinated, and subservient unto the great End, and unto other Under-aims, becoming the Dignity of reasonable Creatures. It is plain that *Reason* claims so much, and the Scriptures* are full and clear in the Matter, *Whatsoever ye do* (saith the Lord, speaking of stational Duties) *do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto Man. Whether ye Eat or Drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God. Whatever ye do in Word, or in Deed, do it all in the Name of the Lord Jesus :* with a great deal more to the like purpose, which might be mentioned were it necessary, but I enlarge not. To proceed to the Comparison; such a Management would require amongst others, these following Particulars, 1st, That a *conscientious Respect* to the Appointment of our sovereign Lord and Law-giver, should be the *leading Principle* of our Motions in the Sphere of a lawful Calling, and we ought therein to have all the regards to a Deity, which the State and Regulation of reasonable Creatures to their Lord and Law-giver do bear. 2^d, That every Thing belonging thereunto, be managed with such *Veracity, Candor, Discretion, and Kindness* towards others, which our Hearts could warrantably desire in our own Cases. 3^d, That in the whole, a just Respect be had to the Good of the

Com-

* 1 Cor. 10, 31. Col. 3. 17. 23.

Community, and the Benefit of our Neighbours, without sacrificing any valuable Interest to private and sordid Gain, Pleasure, and other such base Ends and Uses. This would open a lame Door to melancholy Discoveries of a sad Estate of Matters, in the fore-mentioned, and other the like Respects, but I think not the Labour will be needful, forasmuch as the Evils are too palpable, and the choicest Persons upon the Face of the Earth, are sensible of many Things amiss in their own Conduct, with reference to the sweet and clear Obligations which ly upon us all, from the Maxim. As to the 3d Corrolary or Consequence, namely, *That nothing can be reputed justly and rationally Pleasant, unless it be also truly Profitable, as one way or another, serving the important Ends and Uses of Life.* I presume no honest Man will question the Obligation, and if we herewith compare the many *sensual Pleasures*, and other manifold *Vanities*, unto which our Minds are strongly addicted, the Contrariety of our Natures to indisputable Duty in all this, will be abundantly manifest. So much for the 5th Axiom.

As to the 6th contained also in the 5th *Mis-sive*, and there explained at some Length, it amounts to this, *viz. No Considerations of any Person whatsoever afford real Ground to swerve in the least from the Way of Duty.* Reason saith, *There is no sufficient Warrant here to support such Declinings, and therefore scarce any of the*
guilty

guilty have the Impudence, or rather the Ingenuity to profess the naked Truth, and to own their real Motives, while they act a wicked and most abject Part in *serving of Men*; but upon the contrary, they all pretend to act honestly, and upon Grounds just and solid. The Scriptures* are also clear and plentiful in condemning this Servitude. *If I yet pleased Men, I would not be the Servant of Christ. Ye are bought with a Price, be not ye the Servants of Men. Fear not them that can kill the Body, &c.* The Testimony which the *Herodians* gave to the Lord Jesus is very clear, and pointed to this Purpose, *viz. We know that thou art True, and teachest the Way of God in Truth, neither carest thou for any Man, for thou regardest not the Persons of Men.* All Centers in this, *viz.* No Consideration of Men, however stated, nor of what we think will be either pleasing or displeasing to them, neither of that which we may enjoy or suffer by them, ought to be admitted to come in, as having a Share or affording some Part of the Ground upon which we determine the Matter of Right or Wrong. This is plain from natural and scriptural Light. But how is the State of humane Nature proportioned hereunto? Assuredly the Prospects this affords are very heavy, as will appear from a just Consideration of two or three particular

* Gal. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 7. 23. Mat. 10. 28. Act. 4. 19. Mat. 22. 16.

ticulars, which do clearly and natively result
 from the fore-mentioned Maxim. 1st. Were
 our Deportment suitable to it, we would then
 so Demean our selves in every Concernment of
 Religion, whether the Truths, Duties, or
 whatsoever else belongs thereunto, as if we
 were presently to appear before the righteous
 Judge of all the Earth, when no Creature can
 serve us in stead one way or another. 2^d, In
 this Event, all Men (however otherwise dis-
 tinguished) would be upon a Level with us
 as to these weighty Matters, Feud or Favour,
 Penalties or Rewards, Poverty or Riches,
 Death or Life, would all be laid aside, as not
 belonging to the Cause, nor furnishing any just
 Ground for Determinations of whatsoever
 Sort. We would then judge and act sincerely,
 from an intire Respect unto the Rule, with-
 out being carried aside by *extraneous Considera-*
tions. 3^d. Whereinsoever we might swerve
 (as it is too presumable we will) we would
 (so stated) be very loath to *maintain our Ways*;
 but upon the contrary, we would be sincerely
 willing to bring them willing under an impar-
 tial Search, lying still open to Conviction and
 Instruction. All this is demonstrable, by rea-
 son at the Advantages which Revelation
 affords, and without which we know very
 little of what's reasonable, or unreasonable in
 these Matters. As to Scripture, it is so full,
 in Accounts of this Nature, that I think it not
 neces-

necessary to trace them. Both Scripture and Reason affirm, that it's *meet to be said unto the Lord* † *what I know not teach thou me, and where-insoever I have done Iniquity let me do so no more.* Here I might commence a lamentable Condescension upon many Things which sadly and evidently detect and demonstrate a mighty Propension of our proud Natures, directly contrary to the Maxim, and the immediate Consequences of it, but the Matter of Fact is so evident, that it hath as many Witnesses as there are Persons upon the Face of the Earth, who all would give their Suffrage to what I have asserted, providing they dealt sincerely. Sure I am, that the choicest of Men, do know and lament the strong Propensions of Nature in its present State, contrary unto the Maxim and Branches thereof, which I have just now mentioned. And therefore I add no more, but shall proceed to the next.

The 7th Axiom, *Missive V.* was this in a Word, *Moral Evil is the worst of Evils.* View it explained there. I repeat not, only I must represent a particular or two resulting from the Maxim, that the Comparison may be the more clear, and fair. Is *Moral Evil the worst of Evils?* it clearly follows, or is included herein. 1st, That it can make no Part of the *Happiness* of rational Creatures. The worst of *Evils* can make no Man Happy; and hence it's contrary to

† Job. 34. 31, 32. Hag. 1. 5. Ps. 4. 3. &c.

to Reason, to look upon the most alluring Enjoyments as real Advantages, which are purchased at the rate of any Sin. The Price is too dear. 2d, Such Benefits, how much so ever they may flatter, yet can afford no just Ground for reasonable Complacence. There's a *Worm* at the *Root* of such *Gourds* how fair soever their Flourishes may be. 3d, It is a plain, and in some Cases a heroical Juncture for the Exercise of true Virtue to refuse the going the least of Lengths towards *Moral Evil*, whatsoever Allurements and Prospects of Advantage may offer to inforce such Evils, and upon the contrary pleasantly to chuse, and to go resolutely on in the Ways of Virtue, whatsoever Hardships in circumstanced Cases, may accompany and follow them. Reason speaks, the *Axiom* carries all this, and the Scriptures are all full of it. *Shall * I do this great Evil, and Sin against God.* It is memorable that when *David* had politically adjusted the whole Business after his Guilt in the Matter of *Uriah* and *Bathsheba*, so that all was settled and covered, &c. The Note, I say, which the Spirit of God puts upon the Conduct, is remarkable, and awful, viz. *The Thing that David did displeased * the Lord.* I take the Strength of the first grand † Temptation to have much consisted in this, viz. We were there-

* Gen. 39. 9. † 2 Sam. 11. 27. * Gen. 3. 1. 23.
2 Cor. 11. 1, 2.

thereby deceived, and persuaded to promise Advantages to our selves, at the rate of Sin; and the Byass of Nature is strong that way, ever since our original Defection. But to return, we have many excellent Instances of this truly noble Vertue recorded in the sacred Oracles, and exemplified in succeeding Ages. I incline not to enter upon this Purpose, of which you want not plenty of Accounts otherwise. *Moses* * at once both abandoned *great and royal Pleasures*, and also deliberately made choice of a Life accompanied with *great Difficulties and Dangers*, meerly to avoid Sin, the Impression of which wrought in him a just Detestation and holy Contempt of these Pleasures. I might easily instruct the contrary Propensions of our corrupt Natures unto all this, and might adduce, were it needful, a vast number of Instances. No ingenuous and honest Man will dare to assert that Nature in its present State, inclineth to a *close and critical Inquiry* into Right and Wrong, and carefully to ride the Marches betwixt the one and the other, when the several Motives of the most extreme Danger, or greatest Advantages, do urge on either Hand. In Events of this Sort, our Wills and Inclinations are easily imposed upon, bribed and byassed. In which Cases, our Understandings act the Part of cunning *Advocates*, and are full of Art in contriving, and adorning such specious

* Heb. 11. 25, 26. and throughout.

specious Pretexts as generally pass current in the World: Whereas the impartial Examiners are, by the reputed Wise, even by many of the esteem'd devout Men, looked upon as a Sort of nice and scrupulous Fools, Humourists, the Disturbers of Mankind, and unfit to live in humane Society. So much for the *Axiom*, I remain, &c.

LETTER IX.

Wherein the Nature of the forementioned Contrariety is considered towards evincing the Necessity of a change of Nature for the removal thereof.

SIR,

THe preceeding Missive shewed that Nature in its present State is *contrary* unto that incontestèd *Morality* which I had a little delineated in the *Abstract*, and explained at some more Length in the *Axioms*. I now go on to consider the Nature and Qualities of this Contrariety. And that I may remove Ambiguities, and state the Matter fairly, I proceed in the following Method. 1st, I shall touch at some Lengths of a Sort of Conformity to the Rule which hath been, and may be attained, without a removal of this Contrariety. 2^d, I purpose to shew, that somewhat much beyond all these Lengths is necessary for

a true removal thereof, and to make some particular Condescendance on what's necessary for that Effect. 3d, All will issue into this, That our Natures must be changed for casting them (shall I so say) into the Mould of true *Morality*.

As to the first of these, I represent the following Particulars. 1st, Notwithstanding the strong Tendency of our Natures to all manner of Evil, yet they are under the *Restraints* * and *Checks* of sovereign and merciful *Providence*. *Every Imagination † of the Thoughts of our Hearts is only Evil continually*. All who know themselves can, and will bear Testimony to this sad Truth, and were it not that the Lord puts in some Bar, these Waters would flow with a Current so violent, as would carry all before them. Humane Societies could not stand, and Men, as Fishes of the Sea, would destroy on another. 2d, Such Restraints and sundry Degrees of a Sort of Conformity to the Rule are also procured, and influenced by inward Motives, such as the * *Impulses* of Conscience informed to some Degree, and Impressions made thereupon by *remarkable Warnings*, and awful *Providences*, as also by the prospects of a solemn Account, and by other Means, which grave and worthy Authors have

* Ps. 76. 10. & 65. 7. † Gen. 6. 5. & 8. 21. Mat. 15. 19. * Rom. 2. 14, 15, 16. 17. 18. Deut 4. throughout.

have particularly narrated, and want not to be treated in this Manner. 3. Diverse Moral Virtues have been also practised, and some have been much signalized on these Heads, who yet had not the inestimable Benefit of revealed Light. And greater Attainments have had place at the Advantages of * Revelation, as I might particularly instruct, but that practical Divines have done that at good Length. So much for the first Point.

Nevertheless, 2dly. None of these or the like Attainments remove this Contrariety of Nature, which I evince by the following Considerations. 1st. They are not to be ascribed to any Sufficiency in Man, but are intirely owing to the divine Wisdom, and Benignity, as was just now observed. Hereof I offer this single and decisive Proof, namely, That the very best of Men, when left to the sway of their Natures, have so far given place to the wicked Propensions of the same, as to become a Prey to Temptations, which have carried them to very great and dangerous Slips; a manifest and undoubted Evidence, that Nature in the best of Men, being left to it self, would precipitate them to the most exorbitant Heights of Wickedness, and that the choicest Endowments of true and solid, yea and heroi- cal Virtue, would never stem that Tide, with-
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* 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3. Heb. 6. 4, 5. Mark 12. 32, 33. 34. Mat. 19. 16, 17, 18, &c.

out a higher Influence. Instances of such *Hero's* and their *Falls* we find in History, and the Scriptures are † clear to this Effect. 2dly, As to the foresaid Conformities, I shall not darken the judicious Observations of eminent Divines about them by any Resumption I could make. They have largely demonstrated that they come not up the length of removing this Contrariety. Notwithstanding I offer a very few Remarks, which, I think, may issue the Debate. 1st. As little Rivolets keep their Waters, tho' they disappear and become indiscernable, when a Multitude of them runs into some great River, and are therein swallowed up; so, such Rivolets of vicious Inclinations may seem to be quite lost, when yet they continue in their full Strength, only they run into, and follow the Course of some *Cardinal Vice*, which like a mighty River carrieth them alongst with the Current. Thus a Sort of refined Ambition, takes off a great deal of Fuel from other Lusts for feeding its self, which otherwise would be liberally enough bestowed on these Lusts. In the mean while the Heart is not taken * off, nor are the Inclinations, weaned even from diverse more sensual Lusts, as any ingenuous Person speaking his own Experience, will readily acknowledge. Only these more for-
did

† Gen. 9. 20, 21. 2 Sam. 11. 4. Mat. 26. 69, 70.
Exod. 32. 1, 2, 3, 4. * 2 Cor. 7. 1. 1 Joh. 2. 16.
1 Pet. 2. 11.

did Lusts cannot be gratified in this Event, in regard they must give place to their Superiors, tho not without uneasy Violences offered to them. 2dly. In this Situation of Matters, the famed Moralist is but like a *painted* * *Sepulchre*, the out-side is indeed fair, yet within there is nothing but *dead Bones, and Rottenness*. Men have not occasions for every Lust at all times, and yet these which sleep for a while do come to be served in their Turn, but where there are no Conflicts there can be no Victory; and to be sure it's no removal of this Contrariety when meaner Lusts vail to these which are greater, and truckle it under them for a Time, yea tho' it should be for altogether. 3dly. The more refined that Lusts be, they are the stronger, like the Spirit of a Thing distilled and extracted, which are much stronger than a vast deal of the Subject from whence they were drawn out. These more *polished Vices*, being as it were the *Spirit of Vice*, are truly the more vigorous: And tho' more gross, and sensual Lusts, predomine not in this Case, yet others which visibly reign, are so much the stronger, such as detestable † *Pride, Envy, Malice, Revenge*, and more such of the Brood of Hell, which also exceedingly resemble their Author. Hence in all Ages it has been found, that the Conquests of such Persons unto the

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most

* Mat. 23. 25. 27. † 1 Tim. 3. 6. Tit. 3. 3.

most beautiful Virtues, such as *Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering*, and the like; the Conquest, I say, of such Persons to true and solid Virtue, have been in all Ages the most difficult. Others lay more open to convincing Means, whereas that luciferian Herd of proud Boasters, were almost intirely out of reach. This will be found clearly built upon Reason, forasmuch as, such vain glorious Wretches are full of high Self-conceits, and therefore intractable. The Scriptures are also clear in this Matter. The Scribes and Pharisees were the keenest Enemies of Christ, as is known, and refined Heathenish Moralists were the most ingrained Adversaries of Christianity, *when an evil Spirit returns to a House swept† and garnished*, he fails not to bring in more Store. 4thly, The great Pretences and big Words, which fundry of the more renowned Moralists used, whether these who were famed amongst the Heathens, or such as did set up their Heads within the Church; their high Pretences, I say, were little more than *empty Sounds*, for the best of them lived in the Practice of some *notour Vices*, and became an easy Prey to more, when suitable Temptations did cast up. The Fact in this Case has been abundantly cleared by Authors, who give us Accounts of the most famed

* Col. 3. 12, 13. Eph. 4. 31, 32. Mat. 11. 27. 28.

† Luk. 11. 25, 26.

famed Moralists, which I need not repeat. We have divine Authority interposed here. The *Scribes and Pharisees* covered sundry, most *unaccountable* * *Immoralities*, under their *religious Vail*.

But to come more closely home to the main Purpose, it will appear (which is the 3^d Head) upon a just View, that a change of Nature is necessary for removing this Contrariety, if we impartially weigh the following particulars.

1. The just Notions of a Deity bear, and all Reason saith, That he who is the first Cause, and to whom we owe our *All*, should also be our ultimate End. The Glimmerings of Nature improven in the Scriptures, evince so much, when duly pondered, and the Scriptures are full on the Head. He is the *Alpha* and the *Omega* * of him, and through him, and to him, are all Things. This is a Maxim which nothing but utter Profanity and Irreligion can contradict. Our great Aim then, and Concern in Life, and in all the Business thereof, ought to be a † *pleasing God* in every thing, without any Exception or Reserve. 2^d, It is firmly connected, and even inlaid herewith, that all our Motions in whatsoever Station, should be subordinated and subservient to this great and leading

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* Mat. 23. 14. † Rev. 1. 8. Rom. 11. 36. * Col. 1. 10. 1 Thes. 2. 12. & 4. 1. 1 Cor. 10. 31. Col. 3. 17.

leading Aim, and of a Tendency that carries them intirely that way. But as none of the former Lengths amount to this, being wholly calculated for the Meridian of *Self*, and sitting there; so the following particulars plainly and obviously contained in such a Mould of Soul, will fully make out the Point. Take them in a very few Words. I refer the Enlargement to your riper Thoughts, for that I hasten to bring this Correspondence to some Issue. 1st, A placing our *Happiness* in a *Deity* intirely, and only *. Sure it is the *All* of reasonable Creatures to have Things rightly stated with them in this weighty Regard. 2^{dly}, A through Satisfaction with every Thing which our sovereign Lord and Lawgiver hath declared to be just and right, without intertaining the least contrary Thought † or Inclination. 3^{dly}, That the Stream of our Thoughts, and Affections, and the whole Strength of Soul and Body, which formerly was employed in *serving diverse Lusts and Pleasures*, that all these Motions, I say, do now change their Sphere and Channel, and flow out towards a *Deity* as the *great and ultimate End*, with a * sweeter and stronger Current, than heretofore they did run the contrary Way. 4^{thly}, That in the most *afflicting Events*, a *Revelation of the De-*

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* Psal. 73. 24. Col. 3. 11. 1 Cor. 2. 1, 2. † Psal. 119, 128. Rom. 7. 22. Pro. 3. 17. &c. * Rom. 6 19. Pl. 27. 4. & 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2, 3.

free by Providence, be humbly and quietly submitted to, and the Declaration of the Will of a sovereign Lord intertained and acquiesced in * with that Reverence and Observance which suits our Condition as sinful Creatures, and are answerable to the several Circumstances wherein our sovereign Lord hath placed us. Assuredly a Conversation made up of the fore-said, and the like Ingredients, is truly *rational*, so much also belongs to the casting our Natures into a Mould really *Moral*, and that this requires a change of Nature, or of the ultimate End, is, I would hope, so very evident, that I need not bestow more Words upon it. I remain, &c.

L E T T E R X.

*Concludes the Correspondence, by pointing at the
the Necessity of revealed Religion.*

S I R,

AFTER all that I have hitherto represented, I think it is manifest, 1st, That it is necessary we be delivered from this Contrariety of our Natures to true Morality, both as to Worship and Walk. 2^{dly}, That it is utterly impossible for us, either by our selves, or any Help

* Job. 1. 21. Ps. 39. 9. 1 Sam. [3. 18. Isa. 39. 8. 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26.

Help, that Creatures can afford us, to remove
 this *Contrariety*, and to bring up our Souls
 into a Temper, truly Rational, and Moral. We
 want both divine Revelation, and also the
 Exertion of omnipotent Power, for that Effect.
 It is a greater Work to raise the Soul into this
 Conformity, than that which at first gave us a
 Being. Here a vast Field opens for evincing
 the *Necessity of Revelation*. The Topicks are
 so full, clear, and numerous, that I need not
 enter upon them. The whole of the Premises
 directs unto them, and I intirely refer the rang-
 ing, to your Wisdom and Direction. Never-
 theless, I pretend not to demonstrate the Go-
 spel, or to give any Accounts thereof by the
 Light of Reason. It shineth with such Relu-
 cence by its own Light, that the adducing
 any other Proof would be much like to the
 lighting a Candle, for describing the Sun. That
 the Lord will restore any of *Adam's* lost Race,
 and the Way wherein he doth, and will recover
 them, these Things, I think, we owe purely
 to *Revelation*. I know Men of Learning have
 advanced some Considerations Rational, and
 Moral, from whence they projected to con-
 clude, that God will not suffer the whole
 Race of Mankind to perish in this their utter-
 ly degenerated and fallen Estate, and I might
 give Instances of the chief Topicks on which
 they proceeded, but that I love not to repeat.
 For my Part, I could never see any thing in
 these

these Speculations beyond probable *Conjecture*. And whatsoever they advanced on the Heads of divine *Wisdom, Benignity and Mercy, &c.* in a way of rational Deduction, might be balanced by the Consideration of the divine *Justice, and Holiness, the Enormity of Sin,* and other such Topicks, which (for what I know) could not be easily, if at all, refitted. Thus by our empty and blinded Reasonings, we would but involve our selves into many a Labyrinth from whence I see not how any Threed of our weak and corrupt Reason, could serve to lead us out. Let it suffice, that the whole Matter, being now set in clear Evidence, by revealed Light, every Thing belonging thereunto, howsoever *above Reason*, yet is purely and highly *reasonable*. That I may now issue these Missives into that which was chiefly intended by them from the Beginning; I presume (not to repeat the whole Series) that some few Things of Weight; are set in a plain and convincing Evidence. I have endeavoured to shew the *Enormity of Nature* in its present State; yea, and its *Enmity* against the *plain Notions of a Deity*. I have also detected in some Measure, the vile and poysonous Streams, which proceed from that dark and deep Source, and evinced that both Nature, and the Scriptures declare, that *they who do such things are worthy* * *of Death*. It hath been
also

* Rom. 1. 32. Deut. 27. 26. Gal. 3. 10.

also evinced, that a *change of Nature* is necessary, we must be made New, shall we be cast into the Mould of *Masculini*, true, and highly *rational Morality*. I need not again remind you that we are all atrociously and hainously Guilty, *we have sinned and come short * of the glory of God*. We have offered the greatest Indignities to his glorious Majesty, and therefore are obnoxious to his pure and spotless Justice, and the Honour of God is interested, the Majesty, Justice and Holiness, of the God of Glory, do all demand *Reparation*, I inlarge not. It's plain, and obvious, that we are worthy of Death. What shall then *Attone* for Evils, each of which is a Kind of *infinite Enormity*, as striking against infinite Majesty? *Thousands * of Rams, and ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl, yea the Fruit of the Body*, can never be a valuable Sacrifice. The whole *Universe*, tho made a *Burnt-offering*, could not amount to an expiating the Guilt of any one of these (in a sort) infinite Evils, and far less of an innumerable multitude of them. I pretend not to deduce any, even the least part of Gospel-Mysteries, from the weak and dark Taper of Nature, yet I am bold to say, That the little I have just now advanced concerning the Enormity of Sin, and the Majesty, Justice and Holiness of God, &c. is purely Rational, and all this is set in a bright and noble Evidence by

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* Rom. 3. 23. † Mic. 6. 6, 7. Ps. 50. 9, 10, 11, 12.

scriptural Light. Sure Impressions of this, riv-
 eted upon an awakned Conscience by a
 higher Power, would be of some Use, thro'
 the divine Blessing; to prepare the way for a
 grateful Reception of the high *Mysteries* of Re-
demption, which yet are intirely the *Object* of
Faith. Moreover, a Sense of our Impurities,
 together with the great strength of Lusts, even
 such Notices hereof as are deducible from
 Nature's Light, especially as the same is fully
 declared in the Word, such Impressions, I say,
 may be of good Use, clearly and fully to evince,
 that more is required for escaping out of that
 puddel, and breaking the *Iron Sinews* of mani-
 fold Rebellions against God, more I say is re-
 quired than can be performable by all created
 Strength, and the Effects, are certainly above
 the reach of Creatures wholly drenched into,
 and inlaid with Sin. Thus the Way may be
 paved in some measure, for demonstrating the
 absolute Necessity of a *New Creation*, or the
New Birth. And if we further consider the
 strong Byass which carrieth the best of Men
 with a mighty current out of the Road of
 Christian Virtue, the Necessity of a continued
 Influence of omnipotent Power, Goodness;
 and Mercy, for preserving and carrying on the
 Christian in these Ways, will be manifest.
 Thus it appears that, *Gospel Holiness* derived
 from the *Lord Jesus*, the only enlivening Head,
 is no strange thing, and is most purely and
 highly

highly Rational, in regard all the Efforts of the choicest Men to wrestle thorow the Crowds of contrary Lusts, and Temptations, do prove but vain and abortive; without a special guiding, strengthning, and *determining Influence of the Spirit of God by the Word*, unto whom every good Thing is intirely and only owing. I fear, least in this manner, I debase and disparage the Mysteries of Religion by my poor Reasonings; they are to be received meerly by Faith.

I shall just finish these Missives, after that I have represented, or resumed a few Particulars, which have all the Evidence, Matter of Fact in this Kind, are capable of. *1st*, Nature's Glimmerings discover so much of Moral Beauty, as more than sufficeth to render the Transgressors of what's plain, from thence utterly * *inexcuseable*. *2dly*, The just Deductions from it at the Advantages of its Improvement by Revelation, go a great way further, and upon Grounds so clear, that they cannot be excepted against, unless we *abandon Reason, Conscience, and all that's sacred*. These Detections are carried yet a greater † Length, when the *Law-giver*, himself unveils his own Laws, and carrieth them in upon the Conscience, in their more full Meaning, and *vast Extent*. *3dly*, The Lord's *holding this Glass to the Eye*, discovers be-

* Rom. 1. 12. & 2. 14, 15. † Rom. 7. 8, 9, 10
Ps. 119. 96.

beyond controul, the contradictory Crofenels of our Natures to true Morality. 4thly, The sincerest Endeavours, the greatest and closeſt Application, of the moſt ſerious and concerned, cannot overcome this * Contrariety. Our Struggles to wreſtle out of that Pit, engage us more deeply into it. A *change of Nature, a Renovation of the whole Man*, is of abſolute Neceſſity, for true, and Chriſtian Morality. 5thly, This Change cannot be produced by *Moral Swaſion*, nor can it be the Product of the ſtrongeſt Inforcements of the *Moral Law*. 6thly, It is only the Effect of a *deſtroying the Face of the † covering*, or a removal of the *Vail* from our Hearts by *inlightning of the Mind in the Knowledge of Chriſt*.

That this is a Method, tho' ſupernatural, yet purely, and ſublimely Rational, I humbly think the *intriſical Beauty, and Glory* of the Thing may ſhew, and will evince to theſe whoſe Eyes are not wholly ſhut. The Scriptures alſo declare the whole Matter at full Length : And if our Adverſaries can be perſuaded to have any regard to the Teſtimony of theſe, who have found this Change of State in their own Experience, all of them will ſet their Seal to that which I have advanced, without a contrary Voice. If theſe Perſons can find no Credit

* Jer. 13. 23. 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. Ja. 3. 2. Heb. 5. 6.
 † If. 25. 7. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Joh. 3. 1, 2. &c. Jam. 1. 18,
 2 Cor. 5. 17. Aſt. 26. 18. Col. 1. 13. &c.

Credit, who, I am sure, do best deserve it of any upon the Face of the Earth; I shall only say, it is the desire of my Soul, that the Lord would persuade, enable, and derermine our bitterest Antagonists to come and see.

Thus I end my simple Remarks. No Person can be so sensible of the Weakness of this, and of all my Performances, than I my self am. Yet solid and weighty Truths have been advanced, and the Method is sweet, tho' unprecedented, for what I know. I am not without Hope, but that this mean Essay shall engage some one or more eminent Divines, to undertake the Work I have been aiming at, and to manage it a great deal better. And tho' in that Event, this little Work shall be darkned, yet I will find Cause to rejoyce, that God will be glorified; and some of our Adversaries, may, I hope, be gained; or, at least, have their Mouths by these Means, more effectually stopped. I remain, &c.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PReface Page 5. foot of the Page r. Acts 26. Rom. 1. 18. Preface p. 6. at foot dele 21. p. 3. l. 16. r. therefore. p. 18. l. 13. & p. 19. l. 1. r. endued. p. 20. at foot r. 1 Pet. 2. 17. p. 23. l. 17. before quiet r. a. p. 30. l. 1. r. a less part. p. 42. l. 17. & 27. r. Deity. *ibid.* l. 23. r. Conversation. *ibid.* l. 29. r. demurr. p. 53. l. 5. dele some. p. 56. l. 14. r. disposures. p. 16. at foot Eccle. 7. 8, 9. r. 29. p. 99. l. 8. r. refelleth.

Books sold by Mr. John Macky.

Some Missives written to a Gentleman a-
gainst *Deism*.

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ed Mixture of the Covenant of Works, and
of Grace.

The Right of Church Members to chuse their
Overseers.

Proposals for Peace.

The French Convert.

The Marrow of Modern Divinity.

Gilbert on the Guilt and Pardon of Sin.

Young's Carnal Man Anatomiz'd.

Handwritten text in a script, likely Devanagari, appearing as bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is arranged in approximately 10 lines, with some lines being more prominent than others. The script is cursive and difficult to decipher due to the fading and bleed-through.